

**CHINA IN AFRICA:
THE USE OF SOFT POWER AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR A GLOBAL
“PEACEFUL RISE”**

by
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*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts (International Studies) at Stellenbosch
University*



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March 2012

Declaration

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Abstract

Soft power is more relevant now than ever before. In fact, in the current world system it has become an important element in exercising state power and mapping out leadership strategies. This assignment attempts to analyse the use of soft power as a post-Cold War foreign policy strategy on the part of China. Chinese relations with the African continent are assessed to prove the increasing rate at which China has expended trade and diplomatic relations in the past two decades, and to determine the degree to which soft power is contributing to China's prospects of a harmonious rise to a position of global power.

China's foreign policy is ideologically underpinned by nationalism and confucianism. This stance is based on the need to protect and promote the economic and social stability of the state, as well as to secure a sound diplomatic identity in the international arena. For this reason, China has expanded economic interests abroad, particularly, looking upon Africa as a source of mutual development and investment, economic cooperation and an enhanced network for trade. This has led to the growth of 'soft' ties between the Chinese nation and many African states, through the provision of aid, diplomatic cooperation on policy issues and the sharing of cultural values and institutional norms. In this way, China has been able to promote the perception of a peaceful rise to power and make a valuable contribution to the Chinese goal of constructing a *harmonious world*.

Concluding a thorough analysis of China's foreign policy behaviour it is determined that China-Africa relations are based, at least in part, on soft power, as a means to gain increased international influence. This is contended by the likeness between the behaviour advocated by soft power theory and that of Chinese interaction with African states. Furthermore, this partnership can be understood as a potential global shift towards multilateralism and the belief in an emerging international order that organised by regionalised powers that cooperate with each other on international platforms. The theory of constructivism, particularly its emphasis on the roles of ideas, identities and institutions, is a valuable perspective to consider in approaching this discussion of China as a peacefully emerging global power.

Opsomming

‘Sagtemag’ is nou meer relevante vandag as ooit tevore. Dit is inderdaad ‘n belangrike element in die uitoefening van staat mag en leierskap strategieë in die huidige wêreld. Hierdie werkstuk poog om die gebruik van sagte mag te ontleed as ‘n buitelandse beleid strategie op die deel van Sjina sedert die einde van die Koue Oorlog. Sjinese verhoudings met Afrika word geassesseer om te bewys die toenemende tempo waarteen diplomatieke betrekkinge in die afgelope twee dekades bestee het, en die graad aan wat sagte mag dra Sjina se vooruitsigte van ‘n harmonieuse aanleiding tot wêreld mag te bepaal.

Sjina se buitelandse beleid is ideologies ondersteun deur nasionalisme en Confucianisme. Hierdie standpunt is gebaseer op die behoefte om die ekonomiese stabiliteit van die staat te beskerm en om ‘n gesonde diplomatieke indentiteit te verseker op ‘n internasionale vlak. Om hierdie rede het Sjina uitgebrei om die ekonomiese belange in die buiteland, veral op soek op die Afrika-vasteland as ‘n bron van wedersydse ontwikkeling en belegging, ekonomiese samewerking en ‘n groter handelsmerk netwerk. Dit het gelei tot die groei van die ‘sagte’ bande tussen Sjina en baie Afrika-lande, deur die voorsiening van fonds, diplomatieke samewerking oor beleidskwessies en die deel van kulturele waardes en institusionele norme. Op hierdie manier het Sjina die persepsie van ‘n vreedsame opkoms by wêreld mag te bevorder en ‘n waardevolle bydrae tot die Sjinese doel vir ‘n *‘Harmonious World’* te bou.

Die sluiting van ‘n deeglike ontleding van Sjina se buitelandse beleid word bepaal dat Sjina-Afrika verhoudings is op sagtemag gebou om ‘n verhoogde internasionale invloed te kry. Dit is aangevoer deur die gelykenis tussen sagtemag teorie en die gedrag wat bepleit word deur Sjinese interaksie met Afrika-lande. Verder kan hierdie vennootskap verstaan word as ‘n moontlike globale verskuiwing na multilateralisme en die potensiele van ‘n nuwe internasionale bestel wat gereël is deur regionalisering magte. Konstruktivisme, veral die teorie se nadruk op die rolle van idees, indentiteite en instellings, is ook ‘n waardevolle perspektief te oorweeg in die nader van heirdie bespreking van Sjina as ‘n vreedsame wyse opkomende wêreld mag.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the following people who helped make this research project a reality. My heartfelt gratitude and abundant appreciation goes to them.

- Almighty God, the source of all inspiration, motivation and incredible strength
- Prof. Ursula Van Beek for her valuable supervision and guidance, constructive comments and admirable attention to detail
- My family, especially my father who inspired me to challenge myself by undertaking this assignment, and my mother for her constant unfailing support
- All my friends for being there through the best and worst times, and for those very necessary distractions. Also, those classmates who have become special friends through the provision of mutual support
- Claudia Weldon, a companion like no other, for her praise, encouragement and so much assistance with the logistics of completing this assignment

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

Soft power is more relevant now than ever before. In fact, in the current world system it has become an important element in exercising state power and mapping out leadership strategies. In the words of the most distinguished theorist of soft power, Joseph Nye: “we cannot win hearts and minds without it.” (2006). Yet so many states, policies and scholars neglect the concept and what it stands for in their approach to power politics and global governance. Soft power is too often dismissed on account of being normative in nature, difficult to quantify and, in many cases, simply ineffective in relation to hard power. These are valid opinions. However, soft power is essential in the pursuit of certain state goals, and, in conjunction with hard power, is necessary for any state intending to be considered a truly global power. Soft power is the realisation of goals by means of successfully attracting cooperation, by “getting others to want the outcomes that you want”, through the communication of goals and skilled leadership (Nye, 2004: 5; Nye, 2004b: 1). Therefore, soft power can be understood as the power of attraction (Nye, 2006).

Chinese relations with African states have long been considered a point of interest in terms of multilateralism and post-Cold War power configurations. Further questions have been raised by the sheer scale and unprecedented rate with which China-Africa relations have recently deepened. Chinese foreign policy in Africa is rooted within multilateral ties with the continent and it's couched in terms of the benevolent view of a 'harmonious world'. However, if China is to continue its rise to power in the contemporary world order, a more proactive role, in terms of leadership and foreign policy goal execution, is needed to shape the country's relations with the developing world and balance Western dominance, without posing a threat to less powerful regions of the world. Therefore, it is important tht China make use of soft power measures to attract mutually-beneficial multilateral relations with Africa, build a shared identity based on credibility and common ideals and shift the global balance of

power to include regional powers and by so doing effect a greater representation for Southern states in the global arena.

This study will be carried out by a researcher with African roots and identity and one who also has a good grasp of Chinese culture gained from getting to know China personally and from learning Mandarin. The motivation for conducting the analysis arose also from an interest to find out how the presence of Chinese people and culture is experienced by the Africans in the countries around the continent. This pertains to the significant economic and aid advances made in certain African countries by Chinese business and government donations, as well as the notable growth of some African economies as a result of multilateral institutions, regional organizations and trans-border trade agreements in which China and Africa are concurrently involved.

The topic holds much relevance in the current spectrum of international politics. The growth of Mandarin as a subject of study has increased significantly in the last 5 years precipitating questions amongst Africans as to the scope, nature and degree of Chinese involvement in Africa. An increased Chinese presence in African markets since the opening of Chinese borders to international trade has also fuelled the greater debate about China's rise to a superpower status in the foreseeable future. The argument arose from China's unprecedented growth since 1979, with the increased international influence that accompanied economic expansion, and further gained ground when China surpassed Japan to become the world's second largest economy in 2010. The 2008 global financial crisis will also have significant consequences for the global alignment of power. The international economic order will be altered by the rearrangement of economies in the wake of the crisis and will further be impacted by new influences in global markets such as environmental degradation, expanding illicit trade and other contemporary challenges that arise as a result of globalisation.

1.2 Problem statement

The role of soft power in the international system is too often neglected within the foreign policy processes of states, particularly with regard to growing multilateralism amongst non-Western states. This is despite the fact that soft power has significant implications for alliance formation and changing power structures. The phenomenon is also poorly treated in literature as much of the mainstream material neglects to explore the influence of 'soft' sources of power or conceals the potential of soft

power by focusing the analysis on material aspects of international influence (Gill and Huang, 2006: 17). In the current era of globalisation, in which the role of ideas, identities and institutions is larger than ever before, recognising the importance of soft power is imperative in a state's foreign policy objectives, especially in the case of rising states (Contessi, 2009: 404). One such state, and arguably the most important one, is China. Since the 1980s, China has displayed a significant rise to power as a result of the opening up process and accelerated economic growth (Contessi, 2009: 405). Subsequently, China's interest in Africa has seen a renewed impetus, as is evident in growing relations with the continent in recent contexts.

The growing Chinese interest in the African continent since the end of the Cold War has lead to a plethora of assessments analysing the nature of China-Africa relations and whether these are mutually beneficial and are based on harmonious principles aimed to forge a multilateral world order, or, conversely, whether they are based on economic exploitation aimed to fuel China's rising power status. Many of the studies on this issue assess mostly 'hard' power aspects of China's expanding influence and therefore neglect a critical element of Chinese foreign policy that may be at the crux of a potential multilateral world order based on South-South cooperation and a greater role for China in international leadership.

1.3 Research question

The above assumptions form the basis for the formulation of the guiding research question: *Do the soft power elements of Chinese foreign policy in Africa contribute to China's intentions for a harmonious world and a peaceful rise to power?*

Two main research aims arise from the research question, they are:

- Analysing Chinese foreign policy in Africa
- Does the use of soft power contribute to a harmonious world and/or the peaceful rise of China?

1.4 Research methodology

This is a qualitative study dependent on the use of secondary sources and materials from an existing body of knowledge created prior to this study for another purpose (Babbie and Mouton, 2009: 270). The sources include academic literature, such as

books and journal articles, as well as media reports in the form of articles found in newspapers or on the Internet. Publications from the Centre for Chinese Studies, the Confucius Institute and the Chinese Embassy have also been consulted for subject-specific content. The argument is construed and evaluated against the theoretical framework to help draw conclusions and propose suggestions addressing the problem statement. The theoretical approach consists of the theory of soft power, as championed by Joseph Nye, under the larger framework of multilateralism. The concept of constructivism is also utilised as it provides a useful structural approach to the role of ideas, identities and institutions, which are fundamental to an analysis of soft power.

This study is largely explanatory in nature and seeks to analyse China-Africa relations by providing a detailed account of China's soft power influence in Africa. Its aim is to establish in what ways and to what extent soft power is effective in advancing China's rising power status and promoting a peaceful, multilateral world order. Furthermore, the study attempts to answer the question why the use of soft power is crucial to the strategic interests of China and to see whether a causal relationship does indeed exist between these two phenomena (Babbie and Mouton, 2009: 81).

In order to view the topic within a practical framework the analysis is time-bound. The time frame chosen is from 1990 to the present (2011), starting with the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism, which dramatically changed power structures of the global order giving rise to the phase of China-led multilateralism that has been evolving into an opposition to US unilateralism (Contessi, 2009: 406-407). The chosen time frame affords an opportunity to contiguously analyse China's rise to power, the growth of multilateralism and the increasing influence of soft power in the global configuration.

The study makes use of collectives such as states, organisations and groups of states, as well as social interventions and relevant institutions, as the units of analysis in order to interpret the material and draw conclusions relating to the research question (Babbie and Mouton, 2009: 86-88).

1.5 Limitations of study

The major limitation of this study concerns methodology in that the analysis only makes use of sources that are qualitative in nature. This is because the focus of the study, namely the role of soft power, is difficult to measure due to its non-material nature. Concepts such as soft power are not easily quantifiable, as cultural power influence is seldom empirically portrayed, and therefore interpretation of information throughout the research process is necessary. The qualitative nature of the research excludes any additional value that could be gained from quantitative data, and opens the analysis to subjective interpretations and normative deductions on the part of the researcher.

Other limitations are related to the focus of the study and, more specifically, the necessity to contain the topic within a practical framework. Firstly, the scope of the study is bound by the specific theories underpinning the analysis and the selection of cases is made in accordance with expected outcomes. The case selection is done in an attempt to derive general trends. It merely provides an overview of the researcher's understanding of China-Africa relations and might therefore inherently lack depth and precision. Secondly, the timeframe of the study limits data collection. The period from 1990 to the present was chosen for the reasons stated above, but the narrowing of the time frame excludes the possibly valuable insights that could be gained from prior contexts. Lastly, the study is subject to a structural constraint, namely the ascribed length of the research project and the relatively short period of time in which to conduct the research.

1.6 Literature review

The role of soft power in China's engagement with the African continent has been debated in the existing literature on China-Africa relations. There is a general agreement that burgeoning ties between China and Africa exist, that these are manifest in both hard power resources and soft power forms, and that the role of China in the global structure is expanding in influence by relatively peaceful means. However, there is less agreement as to the exact roots of China's growing influence and there is little concurrence on the topic of Chinese soft power and whether or not it is a source of the country's peaceful rise. This main area of concern is compounded by related issues that are also worth considering. One such noteworthy matter is the

question of what role China's soft power advances will play in the recent context of global power configurations, given the current nature of the world economy since the 2008 financial crisis. This has yet to be sufficiently covered in existing literature because it is too soon to determine the exact consequences the crisis will have for global governance.

Nicola Contessi, one of the authors contributing to the field of China-led multilateralism in Africa, makes a useful link between the use of soft power as a means of soft balancing, necessary in China's Africa-orientated foreign policy goals (2009: 433-434). Contessi argues that soft-balancing is an effective means of strategic social construction, in which the norms and interests of engaged actors are aligned and balanced through the function of multilateralism, to ultimately "neutralise a potentially threatening power" (2009: 433). Multilateral engagement with Africa is therefore the chosen diplomatic tool with which China aims to counter-balance US unilateralism and vie for its own rise to power without the use of aggression or coercion (Contessi, 2009: 433). Contessi provides the useful link between constructivist theory and the potential for China's rising power status through multilateral relations by highlighting the belief that if the current international system is ordered by a set of cultural values instilled in collective identities and institutions, then any change in this system must be precipitated by a transformation at the cultural level (2009: 432).

Many authors approach the field of China-Africa relations from a perspective of foreign policy specifics only, analysing the causes and nature of China's engagement in Africa and assessing whether this is a top-down imposition on the continent or whether the Sino-African ties are mutually beneficial. Taylor, Tull and Mensah are among the authors who take this approach in their analysis. They address the strategic reasons for China's involvement and they assess the benefits and drawbacks for the country and the continent respectively (1998: 443; 2006: 459-460; 2010: 96-97).

Other authors approach the China-Africa relations from a perspective of Chinese nationalism and the threat China's growing economy and increasing global power is having on the West (Zhu, 2001: 1-2; Zhimin, 2005: 35). Zhu and Zhimin argue that the role of nationalism in Chinese foreign policy depicts China's international behaviour, and that in an attempt to secure China's national independence, China will

continue its rapid development and rise to a state of international influence that balances Western dominance (2001: 1-2; 23; 2005: 52-53). Zhimin asserts that it is a positive nationalism that has shaped Chinese foreign policy and that this has resulted in China's growing internationalism and tendency towards multilateralism in the course of Chinese growth and development (2005: 35; 53). Additionally, Horta attributes the turn towards multilateralism, and South-South cooperation in particular, as one of the reasons for China's unprecedented growth, and uses this as the framework with which to analyse the relative benefits that arise from China-Africa ties (2009).

In assessing the degree to which soft power plays a role in China's foreign policy, and particularly in respect of China's African orientation, theorists have noted that soft power is crucial to China's alternative approach to development and is indeed a necessary element to the rise of the country and achievement of global power status. Lee, for example, maintains that China has capitalised on soft power resources gained from impressive economic performance rates to achieve diplomatic influence. Zheng and Tok have used the Chinese foreign policy as a point of departure, highlighting elements such as the 'harmonious society' and 'harmonious world' discourse to prove the commitment to soft power in China's developmental goals and to show the importance of the power of attraction in the aim to expand Chinese influence in the international system (2007). Naidu, Corkin and Herman also show the importance of the power of attraction, by indicating the changes in Chinese policy over time, particularly the new emphasis on expanding trade and development linkages, to serve "African political realities" (2009: 87). This evidence propagates the significant impact of the economic crisis on the global power structure, regional multilateral alliances and China's renewed relations with the African continent (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 87-88).

In order to make an assessment of the degree to which soft power is applied in China's foreign policy, particularly with regards to Africa, and whether or not this is a useful and effective mechanism for which China can progress with its 'peaceful rise' strategy, an investigation of the theory of soft power is necessary. This forms part of a broader analysis of the works and theory of multilateralism, which can further be explained within the context of constructivism. Ultimately, this theoretical framework can be applied to the case of China-Africa relations to help assess the effectiveness of

soft power in advancing the aim for peaceful multilateral cooperation between China and the continent, while simultaneously contributing to the rising power status of the country in the international arena.

Since the 1990's the concept of "soft power" has become commonly accepted, and indeed imperative, within the fields of foreign policy and international politics. The concept has its roots in the relatively recent context of the Cold War and was for the first time published only in 1990 (Nye, 2006). Since then, the term "soft power" has spread as a global phenomenon and has grown as a means of understanding many facets of global power politics that were previously considered "hard" sources of power. The term "soft power", was coined in an article published in *Foreign Policy* by Joseph Nye Jr. (Nye, 1990). This and later works by Nye (Nye, 1999: 166; Nye, 2006) form the fundamental body of the theory of soft power.

Other theorists such as Robert Keohane, Robert Cox and Kenneth Waltz have also contributed to the understanding of the concept through investigation and analysis of their own particular areas of study. Basically, the concept of soft power is "getting others to want the outcomes that you want" without command or coercion (Nye, 1990: 166; Nye, 2005: 5). Various forms, resources, applications and executions of power contribute to categorising power into hard and soft groupings. These are not merely labels given to the measure or quantity of power used in a specific circumstance (Nye, 2006). In linking the use of attractive influence and persuasive power to the case of China, Contessi notes the strategic social construction evident in China's policy of soft-balancing is an apt example of the effective use of soft power (2009: 433-434). To this end, it is further noted that through the use of soft-power and public diplomacy China is able to advance South-South cooperation and ultimately earn a more prominent role in the international system (Shaw, Cooper and Chin: 2009).

Theories and comments about soft power cannot be understood and applied to the particular case of China's international influence when removed from the context of multilateralism. This is because multilateralism is Beijing's foreign policy choice for both soft-balancing inter-state relations with the African continent and mapping a "social infrastructure" to a new role for China in global governance (Contessi, 2009: 404). Multilateralism is generally understood as "coordinating relations among three

or more states in accordance with certain principles” or “relationships among more than two states with respect to some specific issues or set of issues” (Ruggie, 1993: 8; Cox, 1992: 161). Much emphasis is given to the principles, or specific issues, of ordering relations among states in multilateral arrangements, as is evident in the case of China and Africa’s common goals of enhancing their respective diplomatic standings and national economies (Ruggie, 1993: 7; Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 27).

Keohane provides a slightly more specific definition of multilateralism, which he says is the “coordination of national policies amongst three or more states, which exercise this cooperation through the use of institutions or ad hoc group arrangements” (1990: 731). Similarly, Ruggie asserts that multilateral norms and institutions are key to introducing, managing and stabilising a variety of regional and international changes in the world order (1993: 3). The current rise of a host of developing countries, with China at the forefront of this group, to middle power status can be attributed to successful multilateral institutions, a feat which has significant implications for global governance and a reordering of the international structure to include influences from African countries that act multilaterally (Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 29).

It is useful to introduce at this point the concept of constructivism. Constructivism is an approach to international relations that helps to explain and interpret significant changes in world politics and the global order. It can be argued that constructivism best explains power shifts in the international structure because of the approach’s commitment to human consciousness, idealism and holism (Ruggie, 1998: 856; Wendt, 1992: 393-394; Barnett, 2008: 162). Constructivism puts a premium on the belief that world politics is shaped by social ideas and international norms, and that the role of institutions is fundamental in shaping and transforming states’ interests and identities (Barnett, 2008: 162-163; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 888; Wendt, 1992: 394). According to Wendt, the international distribution of power influences states’ decisions and behaviour, based on intersubjective understandings, or collective meanings, associated to the structure with which action is organised (1992: 397). By this it is meant that social structures, built by interaction, define and portray identities and interests of states. Therefore a link exists between constructivist thought and the growing global trend towards multilateral interaction, as a means of constructing collective ideas, interests and identities, (Barnett, 2008: 163; Wendt, 1992: 406-407).

Traditional theories of International Relations and conventional approaches to power politics tend to neglect the role of multilateralism in shaping and promoting norms and institutions (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 915-916; Ruggie, 1993: 5-6). Despite extensive research conducted and published on soft power, multilateralism and constructivism as independent phenomena, the existing literature fails to explicitly and readily explain the relationship between the three bodies of theory and address the potential for international power shifts as a consequence of multilateral cooperation on the basis of shared norms and institutions (Ruggie, 1993: 32; 35). With particular regard to China's use of soft power as a foreign policy strategy, much of the literature analyses the sources and degree of China's soft power in the international system, but little evidence exists of the results of soft power influences in Africa and whether or not this is an effective measure, firstly, to counteract the threat associated to China's power by implicating a peaceful rise, and secondly, to rise to a status of international influence that contests Western dominance in the world order.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Exploring the topic of China's soft power relations with Africa requires an adequate knowledge of existing theories on the topic. These include the theory of soft power, multilateralism and social constructivism. The theoretical framework has been selected for its relevance to the themes explored in this study, and because the author's theoretical capacity and preferences are best utilised in this way. The need to understand the theoretical works on soft power are obvious and they are the point of departure when considering China-Africa relations in this analysis.

Soft power is best understood under the 'umbrella' theory of multilateralism because it is within the realm of increased multilateral activity that soft power is most often encountered and used as a tool for multilateral agreements, negotiations and cooperation. When considering the role of soft power in the field of international relations, the best approach to the topic is via the perspective of social constructivism because of its inherent focus on normative and ideational concerns in international politics. Constructivism also provides a useful framework for analysis of multilateral institutions: how institutions have changed the face of global power, and how multilateralism depends as much on the influence of ideational forces as it does material power forces.

This chapter will explore the theories of foreign policy, global governance and international organization by reviewing the main works on each of the three areas of relevance to this topic. This will be done in order to explain what soft power is, how multilateralism is a key means to execute soft power and how this can best be understood from a constructivist's perspective. The first section of this chapter will analyse the notion of soft power as propagated by the theorist Joseph Nye. The second section explores multilateralism, its increasing popularity in the international system and its uses, benefits and drawbacks for global governance. Lastly, the international relations theory of constructivism is presented as a useful link between multilateral

institutions and soft power. This is done in the hopes of contextualising soft power in the current international order and with respect to the mainstream theoretical body of international relations.

2.2 Soft power

“Winning hearts and minds has always been important, but it is even more so in a global information age” (Nye, 2004: 1). Centuries ago when power and prestige were achieved by means of aggressive influence and outright warfare, it was more important for states to be feared by other states than it was to forge benevolent relations with states that could be perceived as posing potential future threats. The current context of increased communication flows, advanced technology and growing industrialisation in societies around the world has allowed for the rapid spread of information and knowledge, which translates to power (Nye, 2004: 1-2). Therefore the nature of power has changed, and so the way in which we measure power and intend to execute power must also change.

The key to understanding soft power is linked to the interpretation or contextualisation of power. The simplest and most easily quantifiable definition of power is “the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes” (Nye, 2004a: 3). This definition, however, neglects the way in which outcomes are influenced and results achieved by merely addressing the source of power. Here, it is important to note that the definition of power refers to both the source and contingent behaviour that ensues in possession of power (Nye, 2006). Furthermore, the measureable amounts of power resources, often ‘hard’ in nature, do not necessarily produce the desired outcomes. Power is only realised when said resources are effectively converted to achieve stated goals in a given context. This process relies on strategic planning, deliberate operations and apt leadership (Nye, 2004a: 3).

Linked closely to the perception of power is the concept of leadership. This is also very often the area in differentiating between soft and hard power behaviour. Soft power is the realisation of goals by means of successfully attracting cooperation through the communication of goals and skilled leadership (Nye, 2004b: 1). Leadership is important if global leaders and states want to attract cooperation simply by leading by example, without having to threaten, command or coerce others to achieve order (Nye, 2004b: 2). This is the manifestation of soft power, in behavioural

terms, and results from soft power resources such as an attractive personality, values and institutions.

The importance of soft influence in global power politics could be noted in the way in which the Cold War was won, namely, by the use of soft power in conjunction with hard power evident in the United States' strategy of containment (Nye, 2004a: 18). However, it was only since the end of the Cold War and the turn of the 21st century, that the use of soft power as a foreign policy tool has really come into its own (Nye, 2004b: 3). Globalisation and the information revolution have created networks and knowledge communities that increase the role for multilateral cooperation and the importance of soft power. The ability to share information and appear attractive, legitimate and credible in the global spectrum becomes a more important source of power than simply having access to information within a state's national boundaries (Nye, 2004b: 4). Furthermore, the ability to focus communication and manage the overwhelming volume of available information becomes an important power source, which in turn depends on how that information is processed, used and shared (Nye, 2004b: 4).

With the growth of information and new channels of communication, resources such as technology, education and economic development have become more imperative for a competitive advantage in power politics than natural resources, population size, military strength and territory (Nye, 1990: 154). Thus, there has been a shift in power politics from the focus on power resources to power behaviour. It matters less how much power a state quantifiably possesses, but rather what states can do with the resources they have, and with their ability to manage the international environment (Nye, 1990: 155). Therefore the entire global system has become more interdependent (read complex) and any state that wants to compete in the international arena will have to confront the changed nature of power in world politics (Nye, 1990: 156).

The age of information has allowed for both new sources of power and new ways in which influential behaviour plays out in the international realm. Globalisation and the increased spread of knowledge brought about a change in the way we see, and subsequently, wield power. Interpreting power as more than just command or coercion has precipitated thinking in terms of the context in which power relations exist, considering the preferences of the parties involved and the legitimacy of one

party's position of power (Nye, 2004: 2). From this context of a power relationship it is possible to determine that there exists an alternative and indirect means of achieving a desired outcome, by "getting others to want the outcomes that you want" (Nye, 2004: 5). Therefore, soft power can be understood as the power of attraction (Nye, 2006). The power of attraction serves to "co-opt people rather than coerce them" through a process of setting a common global agenda and finding shared goals through admiration (Nye, 2004: 5-6). This form of power, sometimes also called 'the second face of power', thrives in a world of growing interdependence and could be the key to the future of global governance and international stability.

The most commonly accepted sources of soft power include: a country's culture, political values and foreign policies (Nye, 2006). In this sense, foreign policy refers to diplomacy, economic assistance and communications (Nye, 2011). In order to manage soft power resources, international actors depend on organizational, institutional and leadership skills, as well as communications and the ability to embrace interdependence (Nye, 1990: 158). With this in mind, it is worth noting that new power players, or power holders, will include the likes of transnational and multinational corporations, multilateral organisations and other economic actors, which wield international influence by means of reputation, cooperation and economic attractiveness, as opposed to military strength or state territory (Nye, 1990: 157).

Military power is most often understood as the most significant source of hard power. Military might can also result in a soft power influence in the international system (Nye, 2011). When military capacity takes the form of a prestigious well-run establishment this translates into a source of attraction to outsiders. Furthermore, the opportunities for cooperation and security offered by an impressive military can serve to attract transnational links and multilateral engagement between countries. In the same way an overtly aggressive militaristic reputation can repel potential partners (Nye, 2011).

Although there are ample benefits arising from soft power there are also significant limitations to what soft power resources can effectively achieve to secure the desired outcomes. Soft power is often discredited for being exactly that: soft (Niall Ferguson quoted in Nye, 2006). Other scholars and politicians dismiss it as "ephemeral",

“expendable” or claim simply to not understand the term (Nye, 2004a: 16-17). These opinions can be attributed to the confusion flowing from the complexity and intangibility of the term ‘soft power’. In many cases, these are the opinions of those who feel soft power was effective in the circumstances of the Cold War only, and they prefer to now focus on the impact of economic power, rather than use economic resources for investment in strategies and other soft power sources (Nye, 2004a: 17). Soft power can also have detrimental consequences. For example, the American culture and way of life have actually driven away, rather than attracted, influence in some parts of the globe, and even precipitated terrorist attacks such as that of 9/11 in New York and Washington DC (Nye, 2004a: 17).

To effectively use soft power resources short, medium and long-term strategies are needed by which to develop public diplomacy and contend with the nature of interdependence over time (Nye, 2004a: 19). Therefore policy-making must incorporate continuity and change as well as context and trends (Nye, 1990: 160). Power, in general, always depends on the context, which is why the use of soft or hard power resources are reliant on the international environment at a given time and on the specifics of the desired outcomes (Nye, 2004b: 2). Although all forms of power rely heavily on context for success in achieving goals, soft power is much more dependent on a particular set of circumstances in the power relationship than hard power is (Nye, 2004b: 3). Soft power requires a willing, open and eager reception in order to have a quantifiable impact. This requirement necessitates constant strategising and a clever leadership. Some policy objectives are better achieved by soft power measures than by force of coercion. These include the promotion of democracy, human rights and civil society development (Nye, 2004a: 18). Force is said to induce fear, while soft sources of power can inspire causes and increase optimism (Nye, 2011). Developing countries admire and “crave” modernisation and technology as a means to benefit from trade relations, globalisation, improved communication and infrastructure and a range of new opportunities (Nye, 2004a: 18). In these situations, soft power plays a more influential role in attracting influence and cooperation than would military might.

For the limitations inherent in both hard and soft power resources, a strategy effectively combining both sources of power is recommended by, and for, policy-makers. The combination of sources of hard and soft power has been labelled “smart

power” (Nye, 2011). Integrating hard power resources with strategic and charismatic incentives is the most effective realisation of both hard and soft power sources (Nye, 2011). Although hard and soft power strategies can serve to interrupt the progress of each other, in most cases they mutually reinforce and benefit each other (Nye, 2004b: 3).

2.3 Multilateralism

Multilateralism has grown as an approach to global governance and as a perspective of world order in the post-Cold War period. The Cold War saw a unique and fundamental realisation of peace without war or physical aggression, a feat that had never before been predicted, expected or properly considered plausible by any of the mainstream theories of International Relations of the time. With the end of the Cold War came the “most fundamental geopolitical shift of the post-war era and perhaps of the entire twentieth century” (Ruggie, 1992: 3). Since then, multilateral thinking, norms and institutions have played a much more prominent role in power politics and international organisation. Today, multilateral activity shapes the collective foreign policy goals and behaviour in a variety of regional clusters worldwide. Soft power is a key element in shaping a more multilateralist world order in that it puts emphasis on communication and networks as a means of establishing state power and as a way of building leadership linkages across regional and international spectrums.

The organisation of international relations has been described as ‘multilateral’ as far back as 1858. However, it was only in 1928 that the term ‘multilateralism’ came into regular use (Powell, 2003: 5). In the most basic way, multilateralism can be understood as “the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states” (Keohane, 1990: 731). But Ruggie argues that this nominal definition dismisses the qualitative dimension of multilateralism that distinctly defines the phenomenon (1992: 6). In his view the basic definition places too much emphasis on the quantitative element of multilateralism, i.e. the number of parties involved, and not enough credit is given to the fact that multilateral relations are based on substantive characteristics such as trade, security and shared norms and institutions. Ruggie therefore suggests the definition be expanded to also indicate that national policies are coordinated, and relations are ordered on the basis of certain particular principles (1992: 6-7). To this end the USA foreign policy of the 1940s

conceptualisation of the term can be used. The Foreign Policy document defines multilateralism as “international governance of the ‘many,’” and enhances the definition by stating the central principle of multilateralism is the “opposition [of] bilateral and discriminatory arrangements that were believed to enhance the leverage of the powerful over the weak and to increase international conflict” (Miles in Powell, 2003: 5).

The concept ‘multilateral’ can refer to an organising principle, an organisation or a behavioural activity (Caporaso, 1992: 603). The distinction between multilateralism and multilateral, therefore, is that multilateralism, as an institution, includes activities based on a certain principle for ‘relevant’ groups (Caporaso, 1992: 603). Multilateralism, as an organizing principle, on the other hand, is characterised by indivisibility (the scope of costs and benefits); diffuse reciprocity (actors benefit in the long run) and generalised principles of conduct (generalised norms and universal modes of relation) (Caporaso in Powell, 2003: 5). Caporaso further argues that multilateralism is more than a simple state of affairs. Rather it is a belief or ideology since it is as yet still not a fully-fledged theory and is based on less formal and less official practices and norms (1992: 601-602). Multilateral institutions, by contrast, are the codified aspects of cooperation, based on “formal organisational elements of international life” (Caporaso, 1992: 602).

The often asked question is why multilateralism has not played a more prominent part in international structures in the past, and particularly, why it has been neglected in the theories of international relations. This can be attributed partly to the fact that multilateral activity has been precipitated by global happenings and conditions in relatively recent contexts (Caporaso, 1992: 599). The other reason can be attributed to the mixed approach to multilateral initiatives and institutions by states around the world. The United States, for example, would consider multilateralism inconvenient and collective action unnecessary since unilateral action is possible and can be easily managed by this hegemon in many foreign policy circumstances (Powell, 2003: 3-4). The issue of former neglect and traditional international relations theory aside, multilateralism has been embraced as an approach to current events and is increasingly being accepted as an established method of international organisation (Powell, 2003: 3). States are opening up to the “logic of multilateralism”, which offers mutual benefit that all states stand to gain from through multilateral

cooperation, especially in international security and environmental politics (Powell, 2003: 4).

Some even go as far as to say that multilateralism is no longer a choice but rather it is “a matter of necessity, and of fact” (Horsch and Richards in Powell, 2003: 4). The largest advantage of multilateral cooperation, which all states stand to benefit from, is the organised approach to issues of international concern mutual to many states’ foreign policy objectives. The world has increasingly become drawn together in recent times and has become characterized by enhanced interdependence, global indivisibility and shared economic activity in global-scale markets. Therefore, market activity outside of national boundaries results in external costs and benefits, and international effects of production and consumption (Lindbeck in Caporaso, 1992: 599). With this comes the need for increased cooperation amongst states, shared measures of legitimacy and enhanced international organisation, with efficient channels of communication and trade. Caporaso further argues that increased interdependence not only requires standardised cooperation and structure, but also gives rise to a plethora of international issues with a truly global concern (1992: 599). Common international challenges are security, energy policies, air, land and water pollution, disease control, human rights violations, peacekeeping, air traffic control and management and maintenance of rules for trade and investment (Caporaso, 1992: 599; Powell, 2003: 3).

These global issues of concern require multilateral cooperation and are best solved, or maintained, by multilateral norms and institutions. This is because most of these challenges are issues surrounding the global commons (Richard in Powell, 2003: 3). Just as the global commons belong to nobody and everybody, so are the issues around them inherently a global concern. No one country can address these challenges, nor can they be mitigated without the coordination of policy aims and cooperation of all states, as the behaviour of any one state can impact the consequences for all states. Therefore multilateral efforts are vital to curb degradation and depletion of resources, avoid danger to peoples and ensure sustainability of the earth for the future (Powell, 2003: 3).

One way to act more multilaterally is to make more extensive use of soft power measures at the expense of hard power (Nye, 2004a: 20). Soft power can be used as a

less aggressive means of influence to balance power in the international spectrum and limit the influence of states with many various types of power resources. This can be done by means of winning “hearts and minds” of the people (Nye, 1990: 158; Nye, 2004: 1). The implication is for states to cooperate and act multilaterally by means of norms and institutions and for the mutual advantage of all parties involved in respect of mutual issues and concerns (Nye, 1990: 158).

Multilateralism is also closely linked to the middle power as in a multipolar society they are the main actors and units of analysis. It is commonly thought the post-Cold War global context has seen the emergence of a multilateral configuration of global power and world organisation with the mutual cooperation and enhanced influence of many actors in the international spectrum seen as the cause (Cooper, 1993: 1-2). Other voices agree that the current international structure is defined by uneven and multi-dimensional influences from a variety of geographical regions (Cooper, 1993: 2). Although there are still some scholars and analysts who argue that American hegemony and unilateralism define the post-Cold War period.

Here it is assumed that multipolarity is what describes the current world order and that a power balance exists between the ‘middle powers’. The latter are defined as “states that are neither big nor small in terms of international power, capacity and influence, and demonstrate a propensity to promote cohesion and stability in the world system” (Jordaan, 2003: 165). Middle powers, therefore, coordinate, stabilise and legitimise the international order by means of cooperative and multilateral initiatives displayed in the foreign policy behaviour of these states (Jordaan, 2003: 165-166). Middle powers are the most likely actors to promote and make use of multilateral norms and institutions to attend to international problems; in cases such as the Kyoto Protocol, for example, they are responsible for the solutions to these international issues that are beyond the scope of self-interest or regional location (Cooper, 1993: 3; Jordaan, 2003: 166).

2.4 Constructivism

Although not of a long-standing traditional approach to global politics and International Relations, social constructivism has gradually become a very popular ‘social’ theory at the state-level of analysis and is increasingly being accepted as a theoretical paradigm in international politics. Constructivism has often been neglected

by commentators who perceive the international system as one dominated by self-interest and power-maximising actors (Wendt, 1999: 2). However, normative and ideational issues have always been an important consideration in international politics. They have paved the way for social constructivism, which is the official perspective taking these concerns into account. Constructivism is a relevant and informative worldview for its ability to analyse continuities and transformations in international politics, to explore the organisational structure of the world and to consider various factors that shape global politics and construct world orders (Bartnett, 2008: 171).

Soft power is useful and relevant to the constructivist perspective. This is because value-based policy-making promotes the power of ideas, interests and other dimensions of soft power as a means to establish state power and as a priority in conducting relations within the global structure (Chandler, 2007: 1). Non-material interests constructed on the basis of norms and values are fundamental to constructivism and form the basis of the world order as interpreted by constructivists. Constructivism places great emphasis on the identity of a given state in the international arena and soft power contributes significantly to the image building of states and the potential for a positive reputation in the inter-relations amongst actors. Thus, a basic understanding of constructivism is a useful supplementary theory in the analytical account of China's soft power capacity.

Constructivism is often considered as a cultural theory based on social facts and as such at odds with scientific structures. To put it differently social constructivism does not necessarily conform to the requirements of empirical theories and does not pretend to be a theory in totality. Instead, social constructivism is a theoretically informed perspective and philosophical approach to social enquiry (Wendt, 1999: 1; Ruggie, 1998: 856). For these reasons constructivism in world politics cannot be seen as a working framework that offers ready explanations of actions and occurrences in the international arena. Rather, constructivism is valued for its interpretive quality and useful enquiry into many aspects of social political behaviour.

In the context of international politics constructivism is more a social theory or approach than a substantive theory of international relations. Social theories address the relationship between agents and structures without fully addressing hypotheses

and specific patterns of international organisation as other theories of international relations do (Wendt, 1999: 22; Barnett, 2008: 162). The logic of social constructivism appeals to those who accept that shared ideas are the structures of human association and cooperation, and that these shared ideas, in turn, construct the identities and interests of actors (Wendt, 1999: 1). Many scholars argue, therefore that social constructivism is best compared to structural idealism for its ‘idealist’ approach to social life and for its ‘holist’ focus on emergent powers of social structures (Wendt, 1999: 1). The approach is also compared to rational choice, by virtue of its concern with the relationship between agents and structures, as rational choice is also the analysis of how actors operate, and attempt to maximise preferences, under a set of constraints (Barnett, 2008: 162).

At the core of constructivism are idealism and holism. These, and other ideational factors, such as interests and identities, that stem from human capacity and social behaviour are the defining characteristics of constructivism (Ruggie, 1998: 856). Idealism sees the world as one defined by material and ideational forces. Ideational forces are emphasised, while material forces are said to be constructed and given meaning by ideas (Bartnett, 2008: 163; Wendt, 1999: 41). Social ideas require interpretation; these are shared ideas such as symbols, knowledge, concepts, categories, language, rules and norms (Bartnett, 2008: 163). Holism asserts, “The world is irreducibly social and cannot be decomposed to the properties of already existing actors. This is the belief that the action and interaction between agents creates and shapes the structures, and can also help to reproduce or transform those structures (Bartnett, 2008: 163). From constructivism’s apparent commitment to idealism and holism we can deduce a conceptualisation of the social constructivist paradigm of international relations, that being a worldview that is fundamentally about “human consciousness and its role in international life” (Ruggie, 1998: 856).

Constructivists intrinsically believe in the social construction of reality in which all actors in the international spectrum are constructed by their cultural environment (Bartnett, 2008: 163). In such a construct identity, interests and ideas associated with actors are a product of their cultural environment that defines them. At the same time actors or individuals, construct and give meaning to reality, from historical and culturally bound knowledge (Bartnett, 2008: 163). Social constructivism is based on the intersubjective dimension of human action and behaviour (Ruggie, 1998: 856).

Intersubjective knowledge is the result of a cognitive process of interaction between agents (Wendt, 1992: 394). That is, those shared meanings and understandings that are codified, with time, and depend on human agreement. Intersubjective understanding implies the existence of social facts, which unlike observable facts, only exist with agreement by others (Ruggie, 1998: 856). Historical forces and human interaction generate social facts, which contribute to the social construction of a shared reality (Bartnett, 2008: 163).

Constructivism studies agents and structures, and how meaning is created in the relationship between agents and structures. More specifically, constructivists examine how the actors make their activities meaningful (Bartnett, 2008: 164). Actors give meaning to their practices from a body of 'hardened' culture, which they interpret in individual ways to define their activities (Bartnett, 2008: 164-165). This process of creating meaning is also evident in the constructivists' approach to power in the international arena. Power can also be considered to be material or ideational, where material is the observable forces of power and ideational forces are created by the ability to influence behaviour through ideas, promoting interests and giving meaning to identity (Bartnett, 2008: 165). For this reason, it is useful to approach and interpret soft power from a constructivist's perspective.

The way constructivism views the world is plausible for both change and continuity in the international system (Bartnett, 2008: 168). The constructivist belief in normative structures shaping the interests and identities of actors is an ideal explanation for continuity. Constructivism can also account for sudden changes and unexpected occurrences by the claim that what currently exists need not intrinsically exist, and that the world order is only maintained by the continuously changing perception of what constitutes a legitimate international order (Bartnett, 2008: 168). Constructivism requires a 'social' perspective of the international system, one in which the actors of international politics are considered to be primarily social and actively involved in a social system (Wendt, 1999: 2). Constructivists thereby perceive the international system as a dense structure, which contributes significantly to the social construction of states, particularly the identity of states (Wendt, 1999: 2; 7).

Constructivists see the world system as anarchic, as do other theoretical perspectives of international relations, but they do not believe in the 'logic of anarchy' (Wendt,

1999: 247; 308). That is, anarchy exists, but only because no overriding condition dominates international politics (Wendt, 1999: 309). Social structures are shaped by ideas, and the spread thereof, which determine the meaning attached to power in the international system (Wendt, 1999: 309). The structure of the international system, in turn, impacts the construction of states and directs their behaviour (Wendt, 1992: 391; Wendt, 1999: 248). In this context, ideas form an integral part of power and as a result, anarchy is what states choose to make of it (Wendt, 1992: 391; 424).

Constructivists rely on institutions to shape and transform the interests and identities of actors (Wendt, 1992: 394; 412).¹ Identities are formed when interests are expressed in defining processes, therefore, “identities are the basis of interests” (Wendt, 1992: 398). Identities are created, and meaning is given to these identities, in relation to existing institutional roles (Wendt, 1992: 398). This means that identities are always relational and mutually constitutive, and assume meaning only through a process of interaction and participation in collective meaning (Wendt, 1992: 397; 399).

Institutions can be codified and made official by formal rules and norms (Wendt, 1992: 399). But this is not always the case as institutions can also exist merely as a shared, or intersubjective, understanding. A norm is commonly taken to mean “a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 891). Similar to the way behavioural rules are structured together by institutions, but norms refer to each individual standard of behaviour (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 891). Norms and institutions mutually reinforce each other in practice and as a combination they see the entrance of morality and emotional appeal into power politics (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 889). Norms and institutions, as emphasised by constructivists, facilitate and limit international relations and states’ exercise of power.

2.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to offer a brief overview of the concepts of soft power, multilateralism and constructivism as they relate to the theme of this study. Having introduced the main tenets of these three inter-related bodies of theory, this

¹ An institution can be defined as “a relatively stable set of ‘structure’ of identities and interests” which is the result of social processes and participation in collective knowledge (Wendt, 1992: 399).

study will now analyse the current China-Africa relationship using this theoretical background to interpret in a more informed way the foreign policy behaviour of both the country and the continent and assess whether or not this relationship is conducive to the peaceful rise of China as an international power.

Chapter 3

Chinese foreign policy in Africa

3.1 Chinese foreign policy and nationalism

The current leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is underpinned by the ideology of pragmatic nationalism, which has its roots in Confucianism. Together nationalism and elements of traditional Confucianism make up the codified ideology that secures for the Chinese Communist Party the right to rule and maps out an effective approach to international activity (Miller, 2009). In foreign policy China uses nationalism for diplomatic and/or strategic reasons and in order to effectively promote social stability, which is fundamentally based on immediate economic imperatives (Lum *et al.* 2009: 1-2).

Nationalism, for the purposes of further analysis, is defined here as “the process whereby a group or community share common history, culture, language and territory and are persuaded to assert its own affairs, usually through the creation of an independent state.” The concept can also be understood as “the way that the government or other influential agents within a state already in existence set about creating a strong, assertive, national self-awareness” (Zhu, 2001: 3). In this sense, nationalism can be seen as a means to the end goal of national unity and identity, and as an end in itself. Nationalism appears in Chinese foreign policy under the main objectives of protecting China’s territorial integrity, promoting a good image in the international community and building a strong national power through economic development (Zhu, 2001: 4).

Nationalism in China is not a new phenomenon. In one form or another it has existed in the Chinese society since the onset of modernity and has been deeply imbedded in Chinese policy since the 19th century. The Opium Wars of the mid-1800s visited a feeling of loss and shame on China, which contributed to a growing sense of victimisation and inferiority on the part of the Chinese in the face of the rapidly industrialising West (Miller, 2009). Thus, the 20th century saw the building of close relations between China and the Soviet Union, in opposition to the Western Powers.

Since 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded, relations with the Soviet Union were based on a shared ideology (Zhu, 2001: 6). However, by the end of the 1950s, the terms of the Sino-Soviet alliance and the direction of economic development had proven to be inconsistent with the Chinese goal of nationalism, which was to promote and preserve national independence (Zhu, 2001: 9). Consequently, a strategy of economic self-reliance and an anti-Soviet foreign policy were introduced to enhance China's independence and to guide its foreign policy in the 1960s. 'Pragmatic nationalism' was employed in policy-making processes for the rest of the 20th century with a view to unite the people of China in an effort to affect development and promote the rise of China's power status in the international arena (Miller, 2009). In this way the government has hoped to maintain legitimacy and the right to rule the Chinese people, while simultaneously promoting pride, wealth and power for China (Miller, 2009).

Chinese nationalism has been long associated with the origin and development of the modern Chinese state, but it has been given a new impetus and a modern character when China opened up to international integration and instituted economic reforms. When Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the CCP, took the reins of power in December 1978, he initiated a market-oriented domestic policy. The related need to seek overseas investment and promote foreign economic interaction brought a fundamental change in China's foreign relations (Zhu, 2001: 1-2). The change in domestic and foreign policy was made official under the "open door policy" slogan. Its ultimate aim was to drive economic reform by establishing a market economy in China and promoting trade and foreign investment. International interaction was encouraged, particularly with Western nations, for the sake of investment flows into China and technological interchange with the developed West (Zhu, 2001:14).

The desire to maintain and promote national independence took on a different meaning in step with the new economic pragmatism and the opening of China's economy to global interaction (Zhu, 2001: 3; 10; Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 87). In the hopes of maintaining an ideology-led foreign policy in the process of opening up and a strong focus on strategic economic interests that came with it, the CCP encouraged nationalist sentiments to unite the people of China and promote a rise to power based on traditional principles of harmony (Miller, 2009).

Nationalism has always had a strong impact on China's domestic objectives and has appeared on the foreign policy agenda for more than 50 years but the rapid economic development of the 1980s brought a renewed, and arguably more positive, sense of pragmatic nationalism into China's foreign policy (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 92; Zhu, 2001: 2). China's new foreign policy incorporated long-term goals of social and economic development by emphasising independence and peace (Shambaugh, 1996: 205). Promoting peaceful development was a means to achieve the national interests of industrialisation and economic stability without compromising international objectives such as global peace and a harmonious rise (Miller, 2009; Zhimin, 2005: 46).

Modernised Confucian principles proved to be a source of positive nationalism when China's 19th century foreign policy behaviour was ideologically transformed in the latter half of the 20th century (Miller, 2009). Positive elements of Chinese nationalism include a Confucian-derived pragmatic approach to economic development, economic nationalism, a non-military and non-revolutionary approach and the confidence necessary in nationalism to attain greatness as a state and an increasing role in the international system (Shambaugh, 1996: 205; Oksenburg, 1987: 505-507). The CCP used positive nationalism in accordance with selective Confucian principles to determine the rules of international engagement and at the same time maintain a traditional appeal in the promotion of national unity and international harmony (Miller, 2009).

The wider geo-political context and especially the bipolar power configuration between the United States and the Soviet Union, defined for China its own position and image in the international arena. The stance China took was to oppose this bipolar global arrangement. The mainstay of that position was to develop and strengthen relations with the Third World both to jointly oppose the two hegemonic powers and assist in China in its opening up process (Zhu, 2001: 10).

In the year 1989, which marked the abrupt end of the Cold War, Chinese nationalism reached new heights (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 89). This was because the fall of communism weakened the ideological underpinnings of the Chinese Communist regime thereby affecting its power base as well as the hitherto used rhetorical means by which to unite the country (Zhu, 2001: 2). Nationalism was used to fill this gap.

Chinese nationalism was also enhanced in the wake of the 1989 tragedy of the Tiananmen Incident that significantly disrupted Chinese politics and had serious international ramifications (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 89). The Tiananmen Square revolt exposed the needs and desires of the Chinese people placing them on both the domestic and foreign agenda. Internally, Deng Xiaopeng responded by turning his attention to the ways by which to further accelerate economic development. Externally, the aim was to champion a larger role for China on the world stage, this time by re-building alliances with less developed countries (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 89-90; Zheng and Tok, 2007).

China's rapid economic expansion in the 1980s and 1990s thrust the country into the post-Cold War limelight at a time of changing power configurations and realigning global order. The aim of Chinese foreign policy turned to the need to secure the role of a growing power in this new world order without being perceived as a communist enemy or be seen to neglect other emerging powers in the development process (Zheng and Tok, 2007).

International involvement increased dramatically as a result of Beijing's transformed foreign policy outlook. Chinese "openness" reached a high with Beijing's eventual participation in international organisations and institutions (Zheng and Tok, 2007). A diplomatic charm offensive with a rhetoric based on internationalism and peaceful development created a solid network of allies for China, particularly in the South, and thus contributed to a sense of national pride and sovereignty (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 91). The end result of economic reform and development, as well as the struggle for state power in the post-Cold War context, was the realisation of a new Chinese nation, created and recreated by nationalism (Zhu, 2001: 3-4).

The current foreign policy has its roots in two decades of extensive economic growth, continued development, halted and reinvigorated reform, China's confidence in its growing role in the international relations and the need to "ride the wave of globalization" (Zheng and Tok, 2007). Nationalism is arguably the most fundamental aspect of Chinese foreign policy, and has grown in influence to stir concerns in the international community known as "the China threat" (Zhu, 2001: 2). Whether or not China's rising power status in the international system will be considered a threat will

depend on how Chinese nationalism takes effect in contemporary foreign policy and behaviour (Zhu, 2001: 22).

From the positive elements of Chinese nationalism presented above, as well as on the basis of the increasingly internationalist direction of national sentiments in Chinese foreign policy, it can be concluded that Chinese nationalism serves a more positive role in foreign affairs than it has done in the past. Nationalism, therefore, may be the foreign policy key by which China can win positive support in international forums and diminish perceptions of the “China threat” (Zhimin, 2005: 35).

According to one author, Chinese nationalism will serve to preserve China’s national unity and shape the decisions of the CCP in affairs of national and international interest in years to come (Zhu, 2001: 2). However, another author asserts that nationalism can also influence negatively the leadership of the CCP by providing a mechanism for opposition elements and secessionist movements to rally support and eventually overthrow the government (Miller, 2009). Therefore, the Chinese government perceives traditional nationalism based largely on Confucian sentiments as a must to be maintained so as to ensure its right to rule, serve as a cohesive ideology and generally preserve party legitimacy (Miller, 2009).

3.2 Shifts in foreign policy

The form of nationalism the Chinese leadership prefers to promote is often referred to as patriotism, which is all encompassing and “aim[s] to strengthen national pride under the guidance of internationalism” (Zhimin, 2005: 41). The aggressive face of Chinese nationalism in the earlier part of the 20th century has been softened during the 1980s to become common patriotism, one that purportedly strives for national prosperity while keeping in with the mutual aims of the international community at large (Zhimin, 2005: 36). Patriotism is familiar to the Chinese society and has featured in foreign policy since the early twentieth century when nationalist sentiments entered the domestic and foreign policy-making agenda (Zhimin, 2005: 36).

Nationalism, though a long-standing part of Chinese history and tradition, is currently being driven by patriotism and by the need to rebuild the image of China as an international power (Zhimin, 2005: 35). The label often used to refer to the positive

brand of nationalism in Chinese foreign policy is internationalism. In the Chinese context, internationalism was a means of promoting the national interests of the Chinese nation while simultaneously encouraging the global interests of individuals (Zhimin, 2005: 52; Tull, 2006: 461). Internationalism would thereby incorporate patriotism and capitalism and, overall, be considered a revolutionary Chinese nationalism with an international undertone and expression (Zhimin, 2005: 43-44).

Internationalism has been a prominent feature of Chinese foreign policy already in the 1960s and 1970s, but it differed qualitatively from the current brand. One of its major present aims is to serve national interests by means of publicity for international projects. The policy puts a positive spin on China's reputation as a growing power and as a nation doing what some other great nations have been failing to do (Zhu, 2001: 13). The main component of this approach and a key feature in China's overall modern foreign policy is foreign aid. Aid to Third World countries in the form of donations and low-interest loans has been emphasized in the latter half of the 20th century and under the banner of internationalism it has been promoted as "the unselfish concern for other poor countries" (Zhu, 2001: 11). In this vein, Chinese aid serves the overall national security objectives of the state, contributes to a positive Chinese image abroad and promotes China's foreign goals, particularly the building of strategic alliances (Zhu 2001: 13). Therefore, China's foreign policy imperative in Africa can be understood as policy behaviour framed by internationalist beliefs and norms.

China's switch from a purely nationalist policy to a more internationally-oriented foreign strategy and its particular interest in Africa form part of a larger strategy to achieve a more multipolar world order and global cooperation based on multilateralism (Tull, 2006: 459). The foreign policy shifts over the past two decades have been fuelled by China's desire to be more incorporated into the international system and to play a larger role on global platforms (Tull, 2006: 460). This has resulted in a Chinese foreign policy that is more confident, flexible and constructive. It has served to enhance Beijing's bilateral relations with a host of countries and has helped Chinese involvement in a number of multilateral organisations and regional bodies (Tull, 2006: 460). As is evidenced by the increasing rate and intensity of China's movements within contemporary global alliances such as BRICS (McDonald, 2012: 17).

The steering in the direction of multilateralism is a response to the hegemony of the United States that has dominated the international system since the collapse of the Communist bloc in 1989 and is believed to prevent China, and other growing powers, from reaching a global power status. Therefore to contain and limit the hegemon, China has encouraged alliance building in flexible groupings of states under the banner of multilateralism in the hopes of eventually building a unique multipolar system of global governance and world order (Tull, 2006: 461). This has led to the strengthening of China's relations with the African continent and is part of an effort to gain support for the rising Chinese nation in the context of a strategic opposition to the USA of non-Western states (Tull, 2006: 461).

The major shift in Chinese foreign policy has become apparent during the 1990s when the power status of the country rose as a result of its soaring economic success. More to the point here, China's unprecedented economic growth created an urgent need for it to seek energy resources and a strategy of sustainability. These requirements in turn led to a pronounced swing in foreign interests from the Third World in general to the resource-rich African continent in particular (Mensah, 2010: 96). China's arguably aggressive foreign policy turn to Africa is a part of, and is justified by, the Chinese 'Go global' strategy which aims to expand Chinese economic influence by encouraging outward investment and trade overseas (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 45).

The notable shift and the new assertiveness of Chinese foreign policy is said to incorporate more geopolitical and geo-economic interests than the previous strategy of working with Africa to boost Chinese power and create a 'Third World Movement' coalition of less-industrialised states (Mensah, 2010: 96). Of course, this rhetoric still rings true in China-Africa relations in their mutual opposition to American hegemony. But this last shift in foreign policy direction was also aimed at securing energy supplies, primary commodities and diplomatic support for China, while offering Africa an alliance with a rapidly rising power based on cooperation and mutual benefit (Mensah, 2001: 96-97). Most notably, this renewed emphasis on Africa reflects a change in China's international interests from one that was previously based on political objectives to one that is predominantly economic (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 45).

The overriding economic objective as a foundation of China's foreign strategy is now at the heart of the China-Africa relationship and depends greatly on the geostrategic standing of both China and the African continent. It also depends on the state of the overall international system. For these reasons the severe impact of the 2008-2009 financial crisis on the global economic order is likely to affect strongly the China-Africa relationship (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 87). The established economic arrangements between countries around the world in general have been severely shaken up by the crisis. And while the crisis has already caused widely spread international disarray, its further effects hold the potential to fundamentally transform the future of global power configuration.

The crisis has fuelled the need for states to rethink economic strategies and realign international relations in accordance with new needs, desires and realities. Therefore, further shifts can be predicted in China's foreign policy, and changes can be anticipated in the country's relations with Africa. Looking back on the many changes and shifts in the history of Chinese foreign policy provides evidence for the expectation of further changes in foreign relations. However the economic crisis is too recent and its further unfolding is too uncertain to predict exactly what will become of China's international strategy in the near future (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 87).

3.3 China in Africa

The African continent has had a long history of relations with China. There have been many changes in the nature and degree of Chinese ties with various African nations, however, cooperation has been relatively consistent and is ongoing. Recent contexts have revealed a reinvigorated emphasis on Chinese relations with the continent with both China and the various African countries expressing a desire for mutual development through economic cooperation and good diplomatic relations. The different China-Africa forums have confirmed this claim, particularly the Forum on China Africa Cooperation Framework (FOCAC). FOCAC provides a framework for China's re-engagement in Africa in the 21st century and openly states renewed and amplified intentions of multifaceted relations with the continent, based predominantly on trade and economic issue areas, but to the mutual benefit of China and the particular African countries involved (Enuka, 2011: 190).

Up until about 50 years ago, Chinese relations with Africa were predominantly ideological and were very similar to China's bilateral relations with many other states in the international system (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 89). The Bandung Conference of 1955 brought China and the African nations together to establish the Non-Aligned Movement, which was to aid the joint struggle against underdevelopment, colonisation and Western imperialism (Mensah, 2010: 98). China-Africa relations continued to develop under the Third World Movement, which promoted cooperation and solidarity on the basis of five strategic principles: mutual respect for each others' sovereignty; non-aggression; non-interference; mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 91-92; Mensah, 2010: 98).

During the 1960s and 1970s the character of China's Africa policy has been transformed to become primarily economically-focused and driven by a strategy. The goal of the transformation was to secure new trade and investment markets to address the growing resource scarcity (Alden, 2007a: 9-10). The ideological tradition of Bandung remained in China's Africa policy, which still aimed for multilateral cooperation in development and governance, but also called for increased diplomatic support from the continent and enhanced geo-economic ties (Mensah, 2010: 98; 104). China's foreign policy in Africa was consolidated during the 1990s when a range of domestic and international factors confirmed the need and desire for enhanced bilateral relations and a greater Chinese influence on the African continent.

On their part, and in the context of the progressing globalisation, the developing nations in Africa looked to the rapidly industrialising China for access to channels of communication, skills and technological know-how. China, on its part, set an influential precedent for less-industrialised states with its blossoming economy and an offer for mutually beneficial trade and investment relations without political pre-conditions (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 43). In addition to globalisation, a specific political event also played a role. This was the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 to which the West responded with strong indignation. The condemning stance taken by the West ostracised China in the Western dominated international system and forced it to look to non-Western allies for support (Tull, 2006: 461). The period of looser Chinese relations with Africa came thereby to an end as China started to pursue a full

charm offensive to win the support of African countries. This has formed the basis of intense diplomatic relations that still remain in place today (Tull, 2006: 462).

Following the global political trends and realities of the early 1990s Beijing launched a thorough implementation of the China-Africa policy that began with diplomatic visits to African nations and establishing embassies in all but four African states; those that refused to adhere to the 'One China' Principle (Westin, Campbell and Koleski, 2011: 6). Many African leaders facing internal challenges and external pressures to liberalise their political systems welcomed China's renewed interest in Africa. Whereas the Western nations demanded democratic institutions and respect for human rights as a condition to engage in diplomatic or economic cooperation, China offered partnerships with developing African states without interference and political precondition, allowing Africans the perception of stability and progress as a result of their own leadership (Tull, 2006: 461). Diplomatic support from China came with only one precondition: support of the 'One China' principle that does not recognise Taiwan as an independent state but rather as part of mainland China (Naidu, Corkin and Herman, 2009: 105). In return, China received valuable and reliable diplomatic support from African nations to bolster Chinese interests in multilateral organisations and defend Chinese actions in the international spectrum (Tull, 2006: 467).

China's unprecedented economic growth outpaced the growth of its own energy and resource supplies (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 43). The renewed Chinese interest in Africa was arguably sparked off by the discoveries of ample oil pockets on the continent, a noteworthy breakthrough from the perspective of the Chinese who had outgrown their own supplies and faced prediction of a growing domestic consumption for at least the next three decades (Tull, 2006: 466). China's economic prosperity has thus become tied to the sourcing of investment opportunities abroad and to a much-needed supply of natural resources. The constantly burgeoning economy also requires an expanded market base for products and services as well as cooperation with other developing economies to counterbalance the well-developed economies (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 43).

African states provided the perfect opportunity for resource-based partnerships as well as diversified markets for trade and investment. African support, in turn, was

rewarded by China with widespread debt-cancellations, aid donations and low-interest bearing loans, along with booming bilateral trade ties (Tull, 2006: 463-464). At the same time, Chinese exports found an enormous demand amongst Africans as the cheap Chinese labour force translated into attractively low-priced goods for sale to the poverty-stricken communities. Chinese imports from Africa have also increased exponentially, as did the growing rate of return on Chinese foreign direct investment in Africa (Tull, 2006: 646; 468). The Chinese pursuit of economic engagement in African markets has had a significant impact on both China and the African continent and therefore seems to have created a win-win trading and investing situation for both.

3.4 Benefits and drawbacks of China in Africa

Chinese economic interests in Africa have undeniable positive spin-offs for the continent, with particular regard to investment into African states and a flourishing trade arrangement that have certainly contributed to the recent growth and success of African economies (Taylor, 2007a: 32). However, concerns have also been raised that Chinese economic interest in Africa will not help the continent in the long run. It has been said that China might actually prevent Africa's permanent integration into global markets by creating an over-dependence on Chinese products, discouraging a basis for sustainable economic growth on the continent and, more generally, that China resembles the aggressive economic interest in Africa that the Western powers showed in colonial periods (Tull, 2006: 471-472). China is often criticised for masquerading as a saviour of Africa under the banner of South-South rhetoric when in reality the country strongly resembles an imperial power vying for the continents resources and diplomatic support (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 44).

The greatest concern is that Africa may be developing 'backwards' into another cycle of dependency with a similar economic effect to colonisation, namely an imbalanced transfer between markets and industries, insufficient knowledge and skills sharing and a generally decreased quality of life (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 44). This results from a state of extreme poverty and political instability in many African regions that makes these states susceptible to asymmetrical economic relations and tempting offers in the face of dire socioeconomic need (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 46).

It has also been noted that consistent loans and unconditional aid from China are endangering Africa's potential for future debt sustainability and undermining the prospect of good governance that Western powers, and especially the EU, have so conscientiously tried to promote (Ling, 2010: 5). Although China promotes the concepts of equality, mutually beneficial exchanges and two-way cooperation, there is still a slight inferiority inflicted on the continent by the fact that China is a provider of one-way aid.

Arguably the greatest criticism of China by Africa and the West has been the overemphasis on natural resources in China's engagement strategy and the high potential of exploitation and the eventual depletion of these resources (Ling, 2010: 5). The growth and development of China as a rising power is dependent on the cooperation of the African continent. African diplomatic support for China's global ambitions and its heavy presence on the continent is an important factor in the rise of China as a global actor while the promise of a sustained supply of energy and raw materials is imperative to Chinese industrialisation, development and overall growth (Alden, 2007b: 2).

A further point to consider is the manner in which Chinese extraction projects in Africa are undertaken. In many cases the Chinese government is not actively involved in the investments and schemes of the enterprises it owns, besides financial support and diplomatic backing (Bosshard, 2008: 2). Therefore, bad or good practices in business ventures are largely dependent on the nature of the companies involved and are not necessarily a reflection of China's governance or standard of bilateral engagement.

On the minus side of the booming trade ties between Africa and China is the fact that Chinese businesses are out-competing local enterprises and are flooding the markets with cheap goods, often of an inferior quality (Park, 2008: 113). Some of the effects and negative spin-offs of China-Africa relations discussed above have led to a recent African drive to expand their trade base and diversify trading partners, (Tull, 2006: 472). But even so, China has recently overtaken other powers to become Africa's greatest trading partner, a jump which has been accompanied by increased Chinese direct investment in Africa on a similar scale (Chen, 2010).

A concern voiced by many Africans is the apparent disregard for sound environmental practices and social standards. Several African civil society organisations condemned the excessively ‘business-like’ nature of trade relations and the negative impact this has had on African governance and the environment (Alden, 2007b: 12). Small and medium sized Chinese enterprises in particular have been singled out and have been blamed for deliberately disrespecting local labour and environmental regulations in their aggressive pursuit of profits (Alden, 2007b: 13). But larger enterprises are not without blame either as big business ventures and large-scale extractions of natural resources usually take place under weak governance in fragile essential ecosystems (Bosshard, 2008: 1). Oil extraction is threatening regions of indigenous forestry and rare plants or animals, as well as contributing to the potential for flooding, droughts or mining disasters (Bosshard, 2008: 3). Of course, it could also be argued that the extraction projects are no different from those driven by the West, in which financial, military and political support is granted to US, British or French companies and projects by their respective governments (Bosshard, 2008: 2).

Another contentious topic is the presence of Chinese migrants, who are said to be causing a fair amount of disarray in African communities. The Chinese are being accused of racism and are criticised for living in isolation from the local communities. They are also being taken to task for disregarding environmental, labour and/or tax regulations of certain African societies (Park, 2008: 113). However, an examination of such claims reveals that Chinese migrant communities in Africa are complex and diverse in nature, therefore generalisations and accusations about racism and bad business practices are not uniformly easy to sustain (Park, 2008: 124). Isolation from local communities, for example, might also well originate from the enmity of the locals who feel that cheap, poor quality Chinese goods and services have undercut local industries, as well as employment and labour standards (Bosshard, 2008: 4-5). In general, local communities of African citizens have not expressed particular concerns about environmental neglect; they are focused more on the direct benefits they can gain from Chinese presence (Bosshard, 2008: 4-5). Furthermore China has recently expressed an interest in making enterprises more environmentally sensitive and cautious in their business endeavours in Africa (Bosshard, 2008: 1).

Accusations of disregard for human rights in Chinese business practice in Africa are common amongst local business owners and employees, but they correspond more

than the Western understanding of the concept (Taylor, 2008: 65). From the general African perspective there is a shared interpretation of the notion of human rights that differs from the perception of human rights as held by the West (Taylor, 2007: 140). This interpretation is specific to developing countries, and to China. It maintains that the most fundamental and important rights are those to development and subsistence, as well as to the freedom of sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of nation-states (Taylor, 2008: 67; Taylor, 2007: 141).

African elites, in particular, agree wholeheartedly with the basic rights to freedom and existence as a sovereign nation. Given the nature of governance of many of the African states, which are so often dominated by absolutism, clientelism, autocracy and political instability, the governing elites are naturally drawn to partners who emphasise sovereignty and non-interference in the processes of development (Taylor, 2007: 141-142). It can be said that one of the reasons why China and Africa have good relations as developing states is because both sides concur on issues relating to human rights and democracy and support each others' policies and political views (Taylor, 2007: 144).

As shown, the China-Africa relationship is not without its problems and concerns but the relationship has been a consequence of shared needs and a common perspective. Many African voices defend the continent's unique ties with China on the basis of a shared history of colonisation and the consequent similar developmental challenges (Ling, 2010: 6; 14). They point out that Western relationships with African states, by contrast, often fail to recognise the importance of issues such as sovereignty and national imperatives of the previously colonized nations, and that the West rarely creates a positive image of the continent at international forums (Ling, 2010: 6; 9).

What African leaders should realize, but not often do, is that China is no less self-serving than other states are. They should also come to see that mutual engagement will not always impact positively on African economies; the industrial and financial disparity between China and the continent is simply too large to allow Africa to compete with China on an equal footing (Tull, 2006: 472; 473). Yet at the elite level, African leaders and governments have been largely praising Chinese influence in Africa and have welcomed bilateral relations uncritically and with open arms (Alden, 2007b: 12).

Chinese engagement in Africa is still new and growing, and will always be complicated by the debate on ideologies and interests. However, the degree of economic engagement and the terms of trade, aid and investment must be determined also by Africans and not depend solely on Chinese interests and offers (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 54; 55). African states have the freedom and the autonomy to govern themselves and they cannot blame naivety, need, or external factors for the endless problems they face (Taylor, 2004). African development cannot be achieved without the bulk of the attempts coming from within. For this reason African leaders as well as the Chinese foreign policy towards Africa require a fresh, self-critical perspective to better approach the objective of development on the continent (Ling, 2010: 19).

Chapter 4

The role of soft power: building a harmonious world or powering China's rise?

4.1 Chinese soft power

China has been increasingly recognised for its success in gaining soft power influence around the world, particularly in Africa. Soft power emanates from the foreign policy that Beijing purports to pursue and from the content of its relations with other countries. In many circumstances soft power is incidental. It is simply a natural attraction that comes from China's appeal as the world's largest developing country, an attraction that is drawing in many developing nations, especially in Africa (Thompson in Mensah, 2010: 100). For the purposes of further discussion, the concept of soft power will be equated with that kind of attraction, an attraction that appears to be the primary means by which China gets other countries, particularly in Africa, to want what it wants, in the broader international sphere of influence (Nye, 1990; Suzuki, 2009: 781).

Chinese soft power is a relatively new phenomenon that has been embraced by the Chinese political and intellectual elite. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) hopes to attract influence amongst developing and/or non-democratic states by promoting their authoritarian model of economic growth as an example of an approach to development and increasing prosperity (Suzuki, 2009: 780). However, this is a very narrow interpretation. In reality, Beijing's 'charm offensive' is much more multifaceted and includes other objectives such as the aim to counteract Western dominance, and the desire to promote Chinese identity and culture to facilitate its rise to a global power (Suzuki, 2009: 780). According to Nye, the key to an effective rise to power is smart power: the intelligent combination of hard and soft power in strategy making and execution (1990). Therefore, Beijing needs to couple its military and economic strength with careful consideration paid to cooperative techniques, cultural and educational exchange and active multilateral diplomacy. Such a balanced

approach to the foreign policy process amounts to a less threatening rise to global power (Ding, 2008: 195).

Chinese diplomacy in itself can be considered a substantial source of soft power. China is considered a respectable leader of the Third World amongst many developing countries. The enormous growth of China in the 1990s and beyond has pushed the country to become the economic centre of Asia and a regional political hegemon. This regional rise in status has had significant soft power ramifications in gaining global diplomatic influence and rising popular confidence in the Chinese approach to international agendas (Fijalkowski, 2011: 223). Furthermore, Chinese soft power has facilitated China's leadership in forums for multilateralism, South-South cooperation and at other developmental platforms. This holds especially for Africa where China's low key approach to relations based on friendship, equality and trust demonstrate the impact of soft-power for political cooperation and multilateral commitment (Shinn, 2009: 37; Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 47).

Like much else in the country, as mentioned in chapter 3, Chinese foreign policy is built around nationalism. Nationalism is used to facilitate and promote economic growth, social development, resource sustainability, military capabilities and diplomatic power. The policy is known as *zonghe guoli*, or 'comprehensive national power', a concept developed in the 1980s to guide domestic and foreign affairs (Lee, 2009: 3). At the turn of the 21st century the strategy was enlarged by the inclusion of soft power as an overarching mechanism by which to achieve the objective of *zonghe guoli*. In keeping with the theory of soft power, Chinese authorities realised that hard power was not sufficient to achieve comprehensive global influence and that growing economic power would need soft power as a supplement to create a favourable image and environment that could facilitate China's rise (Lee, 2009: 3). Joseph Nye originally portrayed soft power as an extension from existing hard power, as applied to the case of the USA (Nye, 2006). In the Chinese case, soft power was employed independently to counteract the negative impacts that a future growth of hard power may have and thereby facilitate the expansion of hard power without raising concerns of a China threat (Lee, 2009: 3).

Nowadays Chinese nationalism is interpreted as 'positive nationalism', which rejects world revolution and aggressive expansion and instead encourages patriotism,

national pride and aspiration (Zhimin, 2005: 53). This approach is in keeping with the principles of internationalism, which promote international benevolence, global peace and the welfare of the world at large in the building of nation-states (Zhimin, 2005: 44). Internationalism and positive nationalism in Chinese foreign policy have proven to be useful elements in managing China's rapid and unprecedented economic growth in the nineties, adhering to international norms and standards, integrating China into the existing world order and providing a platform for a favourable Chinese image as a peaceful and responsible rising power (Ding, 2008: 194). Together they provide a means by which to achieve an order in domestic society that is in line with international goals and desires.

In this approach, China's foreign policy and diplomatic objectives create a favourable global image and thereby constitute soft power (Ding, 2008: 194; Lee, 2009: 2). A confident and omnidirectional diplomacy has helped the Chinese state promote a globally oriented strategy and international cooperation, while taking part in more forums and taking on more international responsibilities has raised the nation's voice in global agendas (Zhimin, 2005: 53; Lee, 2009: 1; 4). In this way China hopes to achieve two concurrent objectives: to be considered as a truly global power and to prevent the impression that it presents a threat (Lee, 2009: 4; Horta, 2009). In short soft power is used to raise China's image in the international community.

4.1.1 Soft power and aid

Foreign aid in the form of donations, developmental assistance, debt relief, low-interest bearing loans and other economic help mechanisms form a large component of China's international strategy and consequently generate a substantial amount of soft power for the country. According to soft power theory, attraction is the alternative means to achieve preferred outcomes without employing the use of coercion or payment (Nye in Fijalkowski, 2011:224). As attraction is the central concept of soft power and 'convincing others to follow' is dependent on the appeal of ideas, a large part of China's soft power in Africa can be said to come from its foreign policy that appeals specifically to the circumstances of many African states (Nye, 1990; Fijalkowski, 2011: 224).

Chinese aid as a component of soft power is chiefly seen in practice in Africa. Aid to Africa is direct, attaches no political precondition and is often non-financial in nature.

It includes donations for professional skills training and the provision of agricultural technology, as well as assistance in the fight against HIV/AIDS (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 48). Foreign aid is a very tempting offer, if not a necessary essential, for under-developed and poverty stricken regions of Africa (Horta, 2009). In these circumstances Chinese aid is often considered to be more directly beneficial, and thereby preferential, than that offered by Western powers that attach political preconditions and insist on poverty reduction. Chinese aid is often donated to projects that are more attractive to African leaders such as financing prestigious buildings, national stadiums and the likes thereof (Tull, 2006: 467; Horta, 2009). In this way, China presents an attractive approach to granting aid without political interference that appeals greatly to authoritarian elites, 'pariah states' and even political elites in more stable regimes that need support and patronage in coalition governments (Tull, 2006: 467-468). China also presents an attractive option to African states that are eager to break neo-colonial ties with the West and forge new relations based on multilateralism and South-South cooperation.

Although it can be said that China's economic interests in Africa are no different from those of the Western powers, Chinese aid and economic incentives offer African states an alternative to Western aid, an addition to Western aid or a better choice than Western aid depending on the individual circumstances of particular states. According to Yin and Vaschetto, this is part of China's 'differentiation strategy' in which it aims to actively differentiate itself from competing trade and investment partners to Africa, particularly Western countries (2011: 49). This differentiation is mostly evident in China's 'complementary' approach to business relations. This refers to the prioritisation of collaboration, reciprocity and interdependence, as opposed to opposition, in trading markets (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 49-50). This strategy of differentiation has been effective in building trust and friendship between China and Africa and in promoting relationships that are generally more exploratory than traditional ties with Western states (Horta, 2009; Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 53)

Chinese aid to Africa is intended as a 'win-win' arrangement. China hopes to achieve diplomatic ties and opportunities for privileged trade and business with the continent through the provision of aid, at the same time increased trade and business ties are also advantageous for African countries and the continent stands to benefit greatly

from the diplomatic backing that accompanies aid and developmental assistance arrangements between China and African states (Tull, 2006: 469; Shinn, 2009: 37).

4.1.2 Soft power and the economic model

China's insistence on non-interference and national sovereignty as a first priority in foreign engagement and economic assistance is of great appeal to African regions that are not interested in reform as a precondition for international aid. Furthermore, 'soft' pulls of Beijing's international strategy also include the opportunity for collective opposition to global hegemony and calls for a new global economic order, as seen in China's support of demands of the Third World for a New International Economic Order which aims to promote South-South economic relations and collective self-reliance (Mensah, 2010: 99).

As already mentioned, a large part of China's appeal as a partner in international relations comes from the enormous success of the Chinese economy and the country's impressive rise to global power status. Economic prosperity has served to provide a high degree of legitimacy for the Communist Party within Chinese borders, as well as contributing to a sense of international acceptance and preservation of the Chinese image abroad (Wang, 2005: 669). For this reason, the Chinese economy and the success of China's developmental model form predominant components of China's soft power in the international community even though economic power is normally considered a major source of hard power (Lee, 2009: 2). Soft power, or merely attraction, can be pursued or naturally generated in the actions of the government, economy or civil society (Fijalkowski, 2011: 224). In this respect, the Chinese example of developmental leadership has been effective in generating soft power, particularly in the African context, without the outright intention to do so on behalf of Chinese policy-makers.

Over and above the immediate economic benefits of China-Africa relations, African leaders are further attracted to China because of its appealing economic model they might perceive as well worth emulating to facilitate socio-economic development in their own countries (Tull, 2006: 471). China's developmental economic model is characterised by flexible market-adaptability and socialist state guidance, this offers an alternative and is arguably more appealing to developing countries than the market reforms of neo-liberal economies in the West (Suzuki, 2009: 783; Lee, 2009: 2).

Evidence of China's well-coordinated strategies for investment and trade have proven to be fundamental in the processes of growth and achieving economic stability in various regions in Africa. This suggests the Chinese approach to economic development may be an enviable approach for some African states to emulate, while also setting a precedent for other states eager to further multilateral relations with each other through the means of mutually advantageous economic arrangements.

4.1.3 Soft power and promotion of culture

According to soft power theory, attraction is produced by a country's culture and its values when these are consistently practiced and received with approval (Nye in Fijalkowski, 2011: 224). In China's case attraction in the context of foreign relations is the result of cultural and ideological exchanges that serve to underpin benevolent relations and the acceptance and approval amongst like-minded states (Yin and Vaschetto, 2011: 48). But soft power is also limited by its intrinsic behavioural nature in the sense that no country yields a universal appeal, and furthermore, is very difficult to pursue in foreign strategy as the concept cannot be employed without a receptive subject. Thus, soft power can only be promoted, and not guaranteed. Soft power is tied to an attractive culture and is achieved through effective communication, making use of various channels such as the media, public diplomacy, NGOs, education and cultural events (Fijalkowski, 2011: 228).

In the case of China, culture is promoted by means of contrast to American cultural hegemony. Chinese soft power advocates taking a defensive approach to building China's cultural soft power to counteract what was previously a common perception that Chinese culture is weak by international standards (Lee, 2009: 4). If Chinese soft power is part of a diplomatic strategy to assist China in becoming an international power, on the one hand, and to counteract American soft power, on the other hand, then culture is the mechanism by which China hopes to achieve the latter. Chinese leadership employs this view predominantly in a Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development that shifts the focus from building Chinese culture domestically, to expanding the coverage of Chinese culture internationally and promoting positive signals to a broad audience (Fijalkowski, 2011: 228; Lee, 2009: 4). Culture promotion is a significant means of enhancing Chinese soft power.

The promotion of Chinese culture is most often facilitated through a series of academic interchanges, training programs or cultural exchanges offered by the Chinese government or promoted by the culture industry. Most significant in this respect is the opening of more than 260 Confucius institutes in more than 70 countries around the world to expand Chinese soft power through the means of promoting Chinese culture and language-learning (Suzuki, 2009: 781; Ding, 2008: 200). Mandarin in itself is generating soft power for China as it is fast becoming a major global language and exceeding the use of dominant European languages, particularly in forums, conferences and business conduct around the world (Van Rooyen, 2011: 1). The demand for Mandarin speakers is felt particularly in Africa to supplement growing ties between China and the continent especially with regards to competing in international markets and taking part in cooperation strategies (Van Rooyen, 2011: 1). Confucius institutes are government funded and highly instrumental in transporting aspects of Chinese culture to centres around the world. In addition, the Chinese government, in accordance with the culture industry and the education ministry, offers a range of bursaries and funding for African students, cultural exchanges to China, training programs and leadership meetings for diplomatic corps, and even vocational education programs in some African cities (Ding, 2008: 200; Lee, 2009: 3).

Despite extensive cultural spread made possible through media coverage and academic interchanges, identity and perceptions play a large role in attracting others and securing soft power in the international spectrum. Chinese foreign policy is fundamentally influenced by government philosophy and the PRC's identity (Shinn, 2009: 40-41) Therefore, soft power is only effective amongst states that can relate to the PRC's principles or approve of aspects of Chinese foreign conduct. Furthermore, the international collective perception of China will always be influenced by particulars of another country's self-identity, as well as through comparisons with other countries (Lee, 2009: 7).

Developed democracies tend to denounce Chinese soft power on the grounds of identity differences with respect to China's lack of democratic institutions, a free-market economy and a pluralistic civil society. However, it can be argued that this is not the case for developing countries, and the African continent in particular; through the demand for China's developmental and economic assistance the latter are much more receptive to Chinese culture and their soft power investment (Lee, 2009: 7-8).

Soft power serves to garner Chinese domestic society by enhancing the socialist value of traditional culture and stimulating the cultural creativity of the nation. Its 'second face' serves to improve China's image abroad (Suzuki, 2009: 781; Lee, 2009: 4).

4.2 Harmony in Chinese foreign policy

Chinese soft power closely relates to the earlier discussed concept of harmony in Chinese society and foreign policy. Beijing has attached much significance to the construction of the concept of a harmonious international order, just as Chinese soft power has been used to promote ideal global conditions to facilitate China's rise (Miller, 2009; Ding, 2008: 193). Harmony has held a priority consideration in domestic and foreign agendas since ancient Chinese philosophies directed society and leadership. The Analects of Confucius introduced the idea of harmony by its inherent relation to the basic principles of Confucianism, such as "doing unto others as you'd have them do unto you" and morality, peace and cooperation in relations with others (Ding, 2008: 196). The tradition of harmony, as proposed by ancient Chinese philosophy, promotes benevolence and leading by example and thereby serves as a likely underpinning for the promotion of soft power in current foreign policy.

Harmony in modern Chinese society is arguably the most fundamental link to Confucianism. The concept of harmony in China's foreign agenda has been growing in popularity since the beginning of the 21st century when policy-makers began to realise that the rule of law and the rule of virtue were not mutually exclusive, but rather that the two are compatible and even complimentary in an approach to domestic and foreign policy making (Miller, 2009). Chinese foreign policy is based on the merits of combining traditional Confucian ideology with the particulars necessary to maintain the success of the current mixed economy; therefore Chinese leaders constantly promote tolerance, honesty and good faith in attempts for peace and development at home and abroad (Miller, 2009). This is seen in many of the Communist Party's addresses and speeches made by Chinese leaders, and is primarily championed by President Hu Jintao, who has made harmony a leadership priority in the domestic sphere and in foreign policy dialogue since 2005.

The slogans of a harmonious Chinese society and a harmonious world underpin a large part of China's recent foreign policy. The enhancement of peaceful bilateral relations between China and the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America

respectively are testament to China's harmonious intentions. Furthermore, soft power and the philosophy of harmony are currently evident in Beijing's foreign strategy to maintain a peaceful standing in the international order in the wake of the tremendous economic rise (Ding, 2008: 197). These objectives are comprised under the goal for a harmonious society and a harmonious world, as detailed by President Hu Jintao policy particulars such as multilateralism for common aspirations and security, international peace and development, mutually beneficial cooperation and working towards a global spirit of inclusiveness (Ding, 2008: 197-198).

Harmonious society, or *hexie sheshui*, is the fundamental basis of China's current domestic policy discourse that guides national policy-making on many levels, particularly mapping the direction for China's socio-economic development. Although the concept of harmony is of a long-standing tradition in Chinese leadership, the manifestation of the harmonious society principle is Hu Jintao's platform by which he hopes to execute new developmental goals (Zheng and Tok, 2007: 2). In this sense, harmonious society represents an ideational framework and a discourse that is accepted in the mainstream as part of a process for a better China in economic, political and national respects.

Harmonious world is the foreign policy equivalent of the principles represented by harmonious society, and guides Chinese leadership in their foreign strategies and the representation of China in the global community. Harmonious world embodies the hope of realising a new stage of domestic development and achieving a new role for the nation in a reformed international order by a proactive foreign policy (Zheng and Tok, 2007: 6). The harmonious world initiative links directly to the use of soft power and to China's expanded interest in Third World regions such as Africa, as is indicated by aid supplied and increased bilateral trade. Furthermore, Chinese culture is promoted under the general label of a 'harmonious world', as one of the underlying principles of harmony is mutual understanding that is achieved through the promotion of ideals and virtues (Zheng and Tok, 2007: 7).

But there is a degree of criticism and doubt surrounding the concepts of a harmonious society and a harmonious world. To begin with, it is still uncertain whether the promotion of harmony has been conducive to achieving uniformity in China's foreign policy discourse and, more importantly, whether the ideal of harmony has not been

used merely as an opportunistic approach to drive Chinese political power (Zheng and Tok, 2007: 2). The other questions raised are whether the concept of harmony promotes or actually jeopardises China's rising power status and whether these two objectives are a direct result of one another or whether Beijing is hoping to conceal a possible China threat under the banner of a harmonious society/world. Whatever the intentions, harmony is a tool with which China mediates the facilitation of a peaceful rise and the promotion of social harmony and encourages comprehensive and universal goodwill (Miller, 2009). Thus whether or not the 'China threat' is ultimately looming, the country's drive for the status of a global power does not discredit its efforts to promote the dynamic force of harmonious diversity and social, economic and environmental improvement.

4.3 The rise of China: Feat or threat?

The current global order is defined by change in the international structure of power and the respective standing of various states. A rising set of emerging economies is shaping a new power dynamic, transforming the basis of the global economy, shifting international relations and ultimately challenging the mainstream structure dominated by US hegemony (Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 27). This shift in power is one from US-dominated unipolarity of the post-Cold War era to a reorientation of power based on multipolarity, led by regional centres of influence around the world who come together in multilateral agreements and forums to demand a new set of international norms, trade agendas and equal representation in global affairs (Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 27-28). China is arguably at the forefront of this movement; along with like-minded BRICS countries and other middle powers and newly emerging powers from Asia, Latin-America and Africa.

The unprecedented growth of China in the global arena, labeled as the 'Rise of China', is perhaps best understood in the context presented above. Excessive debate exists as to whether this rise represents a great new potential for global power configuration and a novel international structure or whether, conversely, the expanding nation will threaten the current state of relative international peace and will override the existing USA hegemony. But the rise of China, as well as the threat of China felt by some states or regions, is indisputable. Thus, the challenge that remains

is to assess the changes to the international order that might result from China's growth and the implications this might have for global peace and harmony.

The initial challenge presented by China's rise falls into the theoretical and conceptual field (Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 29). Mainstream understanding of power structures and the global political economy are called into question with the rise of a new regional and global power. These shifts have been common in the patterns of global governance and world order in the past, but they require further assessment in a multitude of other spheres such as politics and diplomacy, military, economics and the environment.

The burgeoning growth of China's economy in the last decade cannot be stressed enough in an analysis of China's rise. As a regional power, China has expanded to become an Asian giant and the second largest global economy by means of soaring economic growth, a perpetually growing population, increasing GDP rates, global trade and enhanced foreign reserves (Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 31). All factors point towards a complete Chinese economic revolution, compounded by the sprouting of extravagant building constructions in provincial capitals across the country, and an overall turn towards a more lavish lifestyle by the Chinese business community and prosperous officials.

China currently holds the largest active military force in the world and has perhaps the fastest growing military budget. Furthermore, evidence exists of effective techniques in border disputes, accompanied by constantly improving troops and nuclear weaponry possession (Kristof, 1993: 59). The intentions behind and the extent of China's military expansion are unclear because of the ambiguous stance taken by Chinese leadership on many issues of foreign policy and because of misleading budget figures that are being disclosed (Kristof, 1993: 65). It is feasible, however, that significant profits from China's extraordinary economic growth go towards funding the military buildup and could continue to provide the economic means to expand the array of arms, vessels, aircraft and research and development needed to take China to the highest ranked power in the world in terms of hard power resources.

The rise of China has had severe environmental repercussions. Chinese authorities in the past have been as blunt as to say they will go to whatever lengths possible to sustain economic growth, even if it is at the cost of the environment (Kristof, 1993:

65). The extent of environmental degradation caused by Chinese industries is not known, nor is it possible to assess its extent in terms of damage done to fragile ecosystems, energy resource depletion and air and water pollution. This issue provides a new dimension to the traditional understanding of the China threat, as China's growth necessitates a perpetual supply of scarce mineral and energy resource to fuel production and industrialisation, as well as contributing negatively to growing levels of global warming (Kristof, 1993: 64).

A developing power with expanding needs and objectives is sure to have a negative impact on the global environmental system but recently China has begun to show increased awareness of the regional implications of industrial growth and military expansion. Attempts have been made to develop regional natural resources and take responsibility for potentially harmful developments through the provision of financial assistance and memorandums of understanding to business ventures in natural environments, such as projects in forestry, mineral extraction, agriculture and energy sectors (Shie, 2007: 313).

The question remains whether Chinese intentions represent the hostile objectives of an aggressive strategy, or whether they are simply a natural outgrowth of an expanding power. In the latter case the destabilising effects on the international community of an economic and political growth of the magnitude China represents are to be expected and are an important consideration (Kristof, 1993: 60-61). But it seems that whatever the global responses might be they are unlikely to have much impact on altering the course of China's rise.

In terms of global impacts Chinese growth significantly challenges American hegemony. At the same time China's expansion efforts may pose a threat to those of developing nations that not only oppose US hegemony but that are vying to be a part of the construction of a new world system without the presence of any greater power. This is arguably the case for many African states that are unable to compete with the political and economic might of greater powers in international forums. However, China's newfound appreciation for, and participation in, global diplomatic structures, multilateral bodies and international priorities certifies to the nation's role as an emerging power without implicating a drive for hegemony (Shirk, 2004; Shaw, Cooper and Chin, 2009: 35). China's increasing capacity for soft power is particularly

relevant in this regard. Increased diplomatic contact with Africa, especially, suggests China's desire for change in the post-Cold War order and moves towards a new multilateral network of diplomacy (Ding, 2008: 194).

China is perceived as a threat particularly by countries that are on the outside of China's sphere of diplomatic influence and soft power reception. They fear that China is using multilateral diplomacy and dialogues of cooperation to conceal militaristic growth and aggressive expansion for the ultimate aim of global domination and overtaking American hegemony (Shirk, 2004). The threat is also being felt regionally, although China tries to allay concerns. A good example was the aggressive territorial dispute between China and Taiwan in the Strait Crisis of the mid-1990s, which was followed by great symbolic steps to reinstate neighbourly diplomacy within which to negotiate border disputes, sign accords for regional cooperation and friendship and partake in bilateral and multilateral forums (Shie, 2007: 307-308). In addition, soft power measures were taken and included the use of educational and cultural exchanges, state visits, public works programs, aid donations and investment initiatives. Their aim was to prove China's commitment to the peace and cooperation in the region and the world at large.

There is no doubt that extensive military capabilities coupled with enormous economic growth disturb international power levels and pose a potential threat to other states' power. Yet Chinese leaders and foreign policy documents insist Chinese intentions are benign and comply with their proclaimed principles of a harmonious society and a harmonious world (Shirk, 2004; Miller, 2009). Analysts that view these claims with suspicions argue that China's rhetorical embrace of multilateral processes, international responsibilities and global peace is merely a ploy to refute perceptions that it poses a threat (Shirk, 2004). However, Chinese behaviour and actions serve rather to confirm a sincere attempt at reversing the threat and proving non-aggression by taking on multilateral initiatives and joining regional and international organisations (Shie, 2007: 307; Shirk, 2004).

Whether or not China currently represents a threat, or what kind of threat it might possibly pose in the future, are questions that cannot yet be answered, especially not on the basis of the literature reviewed for this study. What can be said is that in the process of its political, economic and military expansion Beijing has made a

significant effort to engage in multilateral structures and develop soft power initiatives (Shie, 2007: 323). At the same time China's commitment to culture, values and institutions as a means of influence has been in evidence more than an aggressive prowess that characterises the conceptualisation of the China threat. This might suggest that the key element of the 'China threat' is not so much the rise of China, but the declining influence, at least in respect of soft power, of the USA (Shie, 2007: 323). Soft power used to figure high on the US foreign agenda, but this is no longer so. At present much more attention is given to current issues, especially to the measures that are aimed to alleviate the effects of the financial crisis reform and counterterrorism initiatives (Shie, 2007: 323). According to some commentators, the US and China may have different domestic and foreign agenda imperatives, yet both are significant power centres that have a common interest in international peace and prosperity and thus the territorial goals, economic advances and political aspirations of both nations can be considered natural and reasonable (Samuelson, 2011: Kristof, 1993: 68-69).

To close, it might be interesting to glimpse some of China's rich history so as to set its current rise into a longer-time perspective. China is the only ancient empire that survived into the 20th century. From antiquity it has contributed significantly to the development of science and innovation: the Chinese conducted the first recorded observations of comets, solar eclipses and supernovae and, among others, invented the abacus, the compass, gunpowder, the wheelbarrow and papermaking and printing techniques. Until its own scientific revolutions in the 16th and 17th centuries Europe borrowed extensively from Chinese technological advances. The later high demand for Chinese tea, porcelain and silk in Europe set the two on a collision course that ultimately led to what has become known as the Opium Wars. In the wake of this mid-19th century conflict the formerly closed markets and resources of China became exposed to the world and to a subsequent colonial exploitation by the Western powers and Japan (Van Beek, 2011). This is possibly why some commentators consider the recent rise of China as more than just a case of a rapid economic advancement. They see it rather as a return to a position of prominence, wealth and development that the country had previously held. One author noted that if suggestions about China's intentions and aspirations are taken seriously, then perhaps we might see history repeat itself (Kristof, 1993: 71).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of findings

This research assignment set out to explore Chinese foreign policy in the context of the current global order. The intent was, first, to examine the use of soft power resources and strategies employed by China in her approach to relations with African states and, second, to determine whether this approach enhances the prospect of China's rise to power in what it terms a "harmonious world". These concluding remarks will briefly summarise the key findings of the study so as to recap the main arguments, and will then proceed to propose areas that warrant further study on the theme. The section will end with some concluding thoughts on the topic.

An academic discussion about concepts and approaches in international politics ought to be based on theoretical assumptions. In this study, the theoretical underpinning for such a discussion has been elaborated on in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework with which this study was approached was constructed from three separate but interrelated concepts. They included the theories of soft power, multilateralism and constructivism and they provided the basis on which Chinese soft power relations with Africa can be understood.

Soft power was sufficiently discussed to allow a conceptualisation of what that kind of power is and how significant it is in current international politics. Multilateralism was then presented as an alternative theory but one that provides a platform on which soft power is arguably most easily executed and in the most successful way. Both of these theoretical principles were then presented under the larger International Relations theory of constructivism which advocates a system of global governance based on shared ideas and values, properties that are in line with- and facilitate- soft power and multilateral perspectives. These theoretical tools were critically examined to prove their relevance to the theme of this study and to provide a framework for the analysis.

Africa was selected as the area of analysis for this study of Chinese foreign policy because of the exponential growth in China-Africa relations in recent decades. In order to understand the context of China's renewed interest in Africa, a thorough analysis of Chinese foreign policy was undertaken to reveal the background and the nature of China's international approach. Chinese foreign policy was shown to be driven by pragmatic nationalism and to be based largely on traditional Confucian values.

The discussion on nationalism revealed a great many changes in the form and nature of nationalism in Chinese policy. The modern version of Chinese nationalism that currently dominates the domestic and international agenda was implemented by the Communist Party to drive the rapid industrialisation and economic growth of China in the nineties. This new impetus was the means by which the ruling Communist Party facilitated the modern character of the state and promoted international activity, without compromising national independence. The ideological underpinning of China's new policy direction is one that is consistent with traditional principles of harmony and retains the traditional Confucian nature of Chinese foreign policy. This approach helped the Chinese state manage and promote the goal of peaceful development at home, and at the international level.

The Chinese foreign strategy was then examined and was applied to analyse the current character of China's relations with the various African states. Sino-African relations are, of course, not restricted to the time period covered in this study. These relations have been in existence for a long stretch of time prior to the ending of the Cold War, but the sudden impetus of the Soviet bloc collapse shifted the nature of the ties between China and the African continent, and it was this development that was of a particular interest in this study.

After the fall of communism, Sino-African ties first perceptibly increased and then intensified enormously as China set off on its unprecedented path of economic growth; good diplomatic relations and a globally-orientated strategy became crucially important for both China's domestic development and its rise in stature in the international arena. Africa, on its part embraced with enthusiasm ties with a country that could now offer it vital economic support. The post-Cold War intensification of China-Africa relations was accompanied by a change in the nature of these relations.

On the one hand the relations are no longer underpinned by ideology, on the other hand, they are different from the type of diplomatic ties African states maintain with Western powers. Current China-Africa relations are characterised by a far more direct relationship that is purportedly based on mutual benefit and that places a far greater emphasis on a change in direction towards a multilateral world order.

The relationship between China and Africa was discussed here in terms of its benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, the relationship has been shown to have a positive economic impact on both China and the African states: the latter stand to benefit from flourishing trade, increased investment flows and they are getting a boost in their position in the international economy. China, meanwhile, gains tremendously from beneficial agreements with African states that grant it access to the continent's natural resources and that open up a market for Chinese goods and labour; to say nothing of the much desired diplomatic backing in international forums for the One China Principle. On the other hand, Chinese extraction projects in Africa are proving to be detrimental to the environment and to the sustainability of resources. African states are also at risk of becoming over-dependent on Chinese aid and diplomatic backing. Rather than helping them to pursue their own development and economic growth agenda, a similar trend to the one created by Western powers in the process of colonisation could well be in progress.

In the final chapter of this analysis the question has been raised as to whether China's increased use of soft power in foreign strategies, particularly in Africa, is genuinely aimed at promoting a harmonious world, or whether it is merely a device used to gain support on its way to a global rise. The question cannot be answered adequately here, as this requires a much deeper, empirically supported investigation. What can be said on the basis of the secondary sources used in this study is that soft power is indeed a crucial component of China's foreign policy and that it seems to be increasingly winning the hearts and minds of Africans. It can also be said that China applies the concept of soft power in the language of international cooperation and by so doing makes use of new and effective means for building diplomatic alliances. In the African context the alliance is moving towards a new trend in global governance in which China and African states pursue shared international objectives based on multilateralism.

Finally, this study has attempted to show that the soft-pulls of China's Africa policy are in line with both the goals of promoting the principles of harmony at the international level and of China's overall growth to achieve the status of a truly global power. This can best be understood by referring to the overarching theories introduced in the beginning of this study, namely those of soft power, multilateralism and constructivism. Employing these theoretical perspectives the analyses revealed that China's foreign policy has shifted in recent times to be fundamentally driven by soft power within the context of an alliance formation with less-developed countries. This has the potential to transform global governance into a situation in which regional groupings act multilaterally through forums and organisations headed by regional powers. And at the broadest level of analysis, as constructivism propagates, these multilateral forums would make use of 'soft' measures such as norms, ideas and institutions to conduct forums and guide international cooperation.

5.2 Recent developments and prospects for future research

This study has attempted to analyse the China-Africa relationship through the lens of 'soft power' as an element in establishing and deepening relations within an increasingly multilateral approach to global governance and a constructivist perspective of the world order. While the research was confined to this particular conceptual framework, it has stimulated thoughts on problems falling outside its intended boundaries. This was especially the case when addressing issues of a current nature set in an evolving context. To put it another way, the timeframe and scope of this research has limited the direction and expansion of study to what has been discussed, but has stimulated thoughts of potential further research into some aspects of the greater theme. These proposed recommendations for future research are presented here.

The examination of China's relations with Africa revealed a growing tension between, respectively, the interests of the Chinese Communist Party and those of the people of various African nations. Most of the existing literature on the topic, including this study, presents a view from the perspective of either the Chinese leadership or from the point of view of the African elites. Further research, beyond that of suggesting China's exploitation of African resources, is necessary to gain an understanding of other African parties. This would contrast what one suspects might

be a very different reception that Chinese involvement in Africa receives from the elites of African political communities, to the reaction of the people at grass-roots levels within the various societies.

This raises the issue of methodology. This study was based entirely on qualitative sources of information that were created before the research on this project had begun. The age old question of whether quantitative data or qualitative data are more useful and more accurate prompts the suggestion for a similar study to be undertaken, but using quantitative sources to attempt to answer the same research question with substantiating data of a different nature. In this regard, surveys and questionnaires yielding numerical results could lend substance to a different argument and/or a more emphatic representation of perceptions of China's use of soft power in Africa.

With contemporary global issues comes the need to constantly produce new research that reflects on issues of global governance and trends in international relations within the context of an ever-changing world order. One issue of such particular relevance in the case of Chinese interest in African economies is the ecological concern for the sustainability of valuable natural resources and rare ecosystems. Climate change issues have proven to be a heightened concern for regional political groupings and have made headway in international forums, reflecting that environmental issues are indeed a policy issue and require cooperation across global spectrums to challenge what is certainly a mutual problem. A future study on the environmental impacts of China-Africa relations may be of great relevance for the prospect of China's rise to power, in respect of the fact that the new world order will require significant attention to international environmental policy as a priority in global governance.

The banking crisis of 2008-2009 caused a global financial meltdown, the effects of which will be felt for years to come. It is too soon to determine the entirety of these effects on the whole economic system, and more significantly, the ramifications they will have on the power relations of states in the international order. So far, the effects of the crisis have been felt most acutely in the Western states. The USA was particularly hard hit. Conversely, China has been less exposed owing to the state's commitment to stabilise and promote economic growth at any cost (Han and Lu, 2012: 159). Although impacted by a range of negative effects such as decreased exports, increased unemployment and loss of foreign assets, the Chinese state has

facilitated considerable recovery and used effective crisis management to limit the impact of the crisis to an economic “slowdown rather than a meltdown” and simultaneously diminish social turmoil (Han and Lu, 2012: 152; 157).. The global order will see more significant changes in the wake of the crisis and as a result of the realignment of states to suit the possible emergence of new power structures. One can foresee a rising importance of other sources of power, especially soft power. The potential decline of US’ soft power reserves is an issue that will require much more scrutiny in future, especially in relation to analyses of China’s rise.

5.3 Concluding thoughts

This study has shown that soft power is the fundamental means by which the Chinese state is trying to achieve its goals, especially as a component of China’s rising status in the international community. The current state of the international order is characterised by increasing self-determination on the part of states, deeper sovereignty than that of decades passed and globalisation, which facilitates unification of the international economy, the enormous growth of communication, dissemination of information and the spread of socio-cultural flows. Ideas like soft power and the fact that it is equally, if not more so, influential than hard power will flourish in this context.

The expectation when choosing soft power as the focus for this analysis was that the general theme of China-Africa relations could then be explored in a deeper and more specifically oriented manner than a simple analysis of the costs and benefits of that relationship. It is hoped that the chosen approach has added value to the study and that it might contribute to the growing body of knowledge that builds on the relatively recent existing works on soft power and reflects the potential soft power has to transform the global order and become the standard means of global governance in the near future.

With the world constantly in a flux, and the state of international order becoming ever more complex, only time will tell whether China’s rise will continue to disrupt the state of international politics as we know it. That is to say, whether it will contribute to a global order of cooperative harmony between various powerful states or whether it will drive other states out of power positions and replace the USA as a global hegemon. What can be determined at this point is that soft power can be a key to the

means by which a multilateral international order could be built. An order based on peaceful development of individual states and international cooperation through global forums headed by a group of regional powers, such as BRICS and various international organisations working towards a harmonious world for all.

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